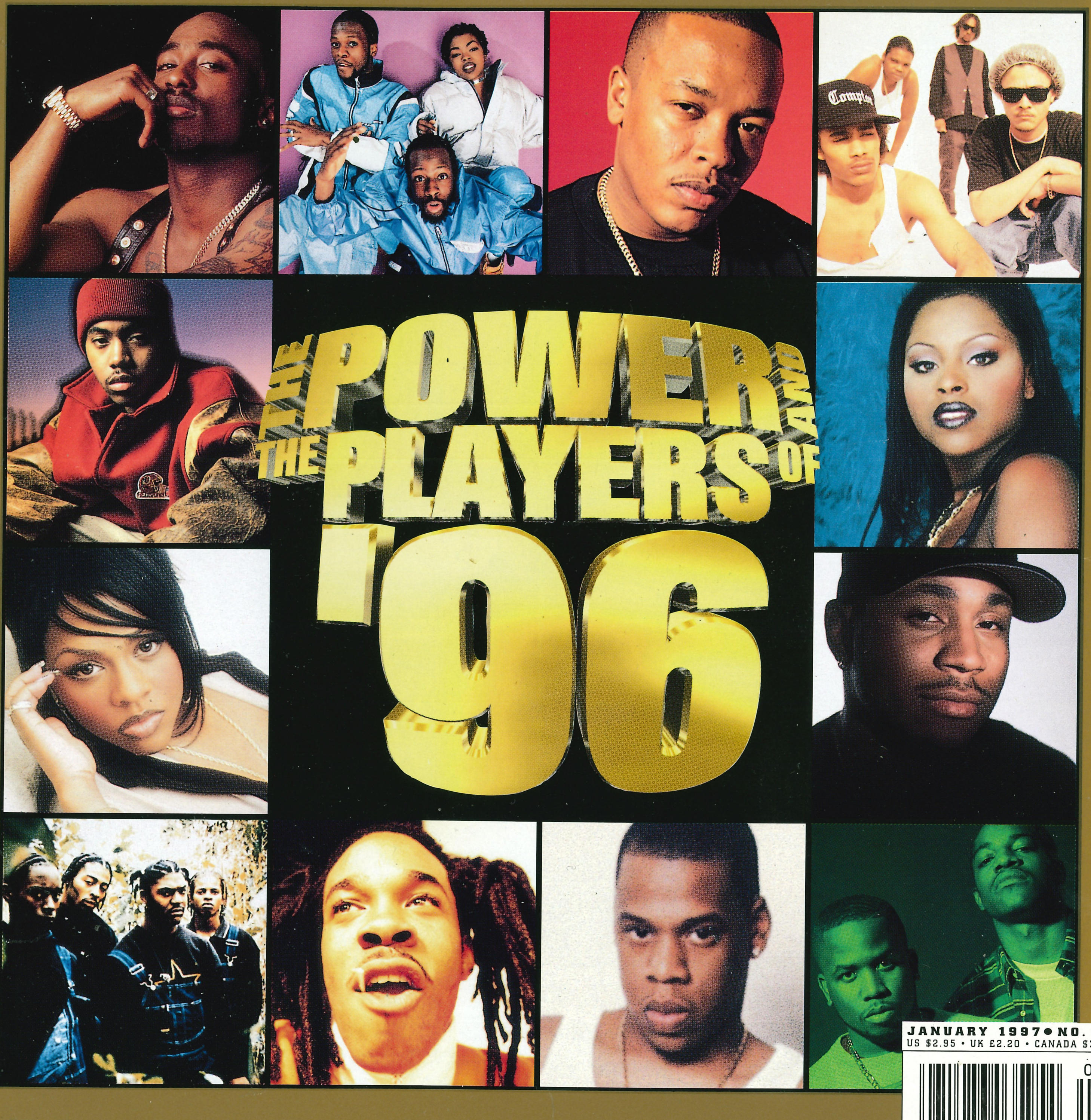
SPECIAL YEARBOOK EDITION: THE 1996 HIP-HOP YEAR IN REVIEW

THE SOURCE

THE MAGAZINE OF HIP-HOP MUSIC, CULTURE & POLITICS



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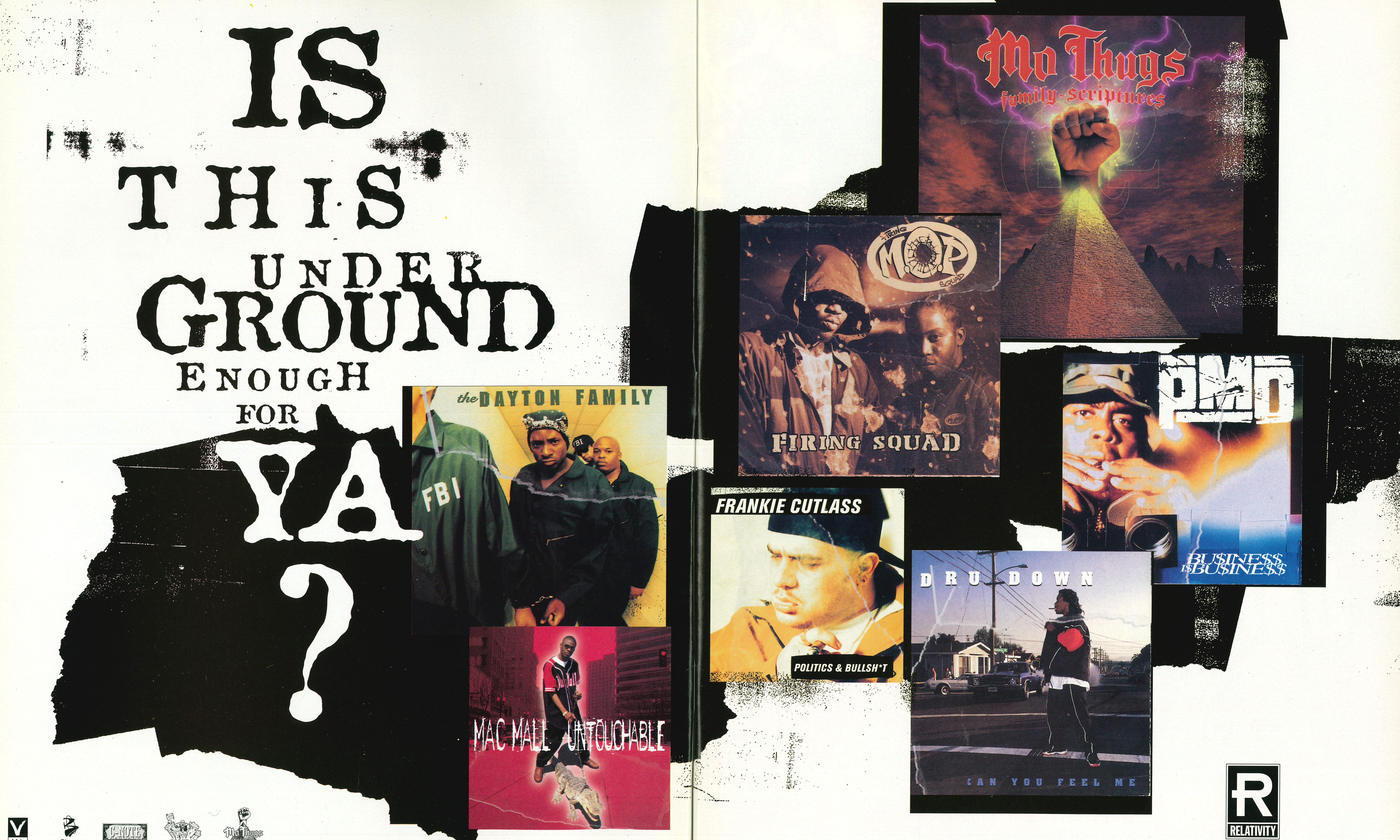
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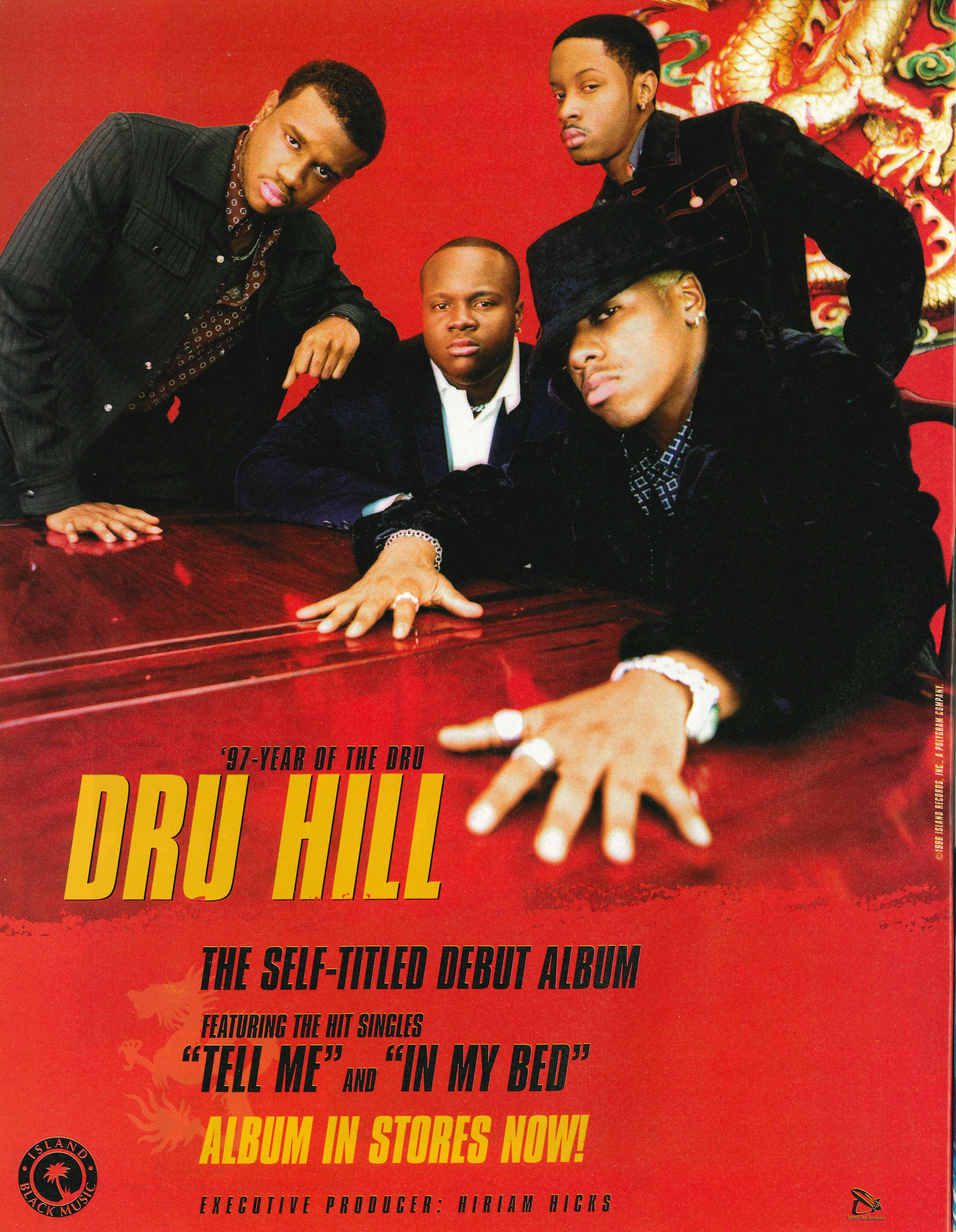

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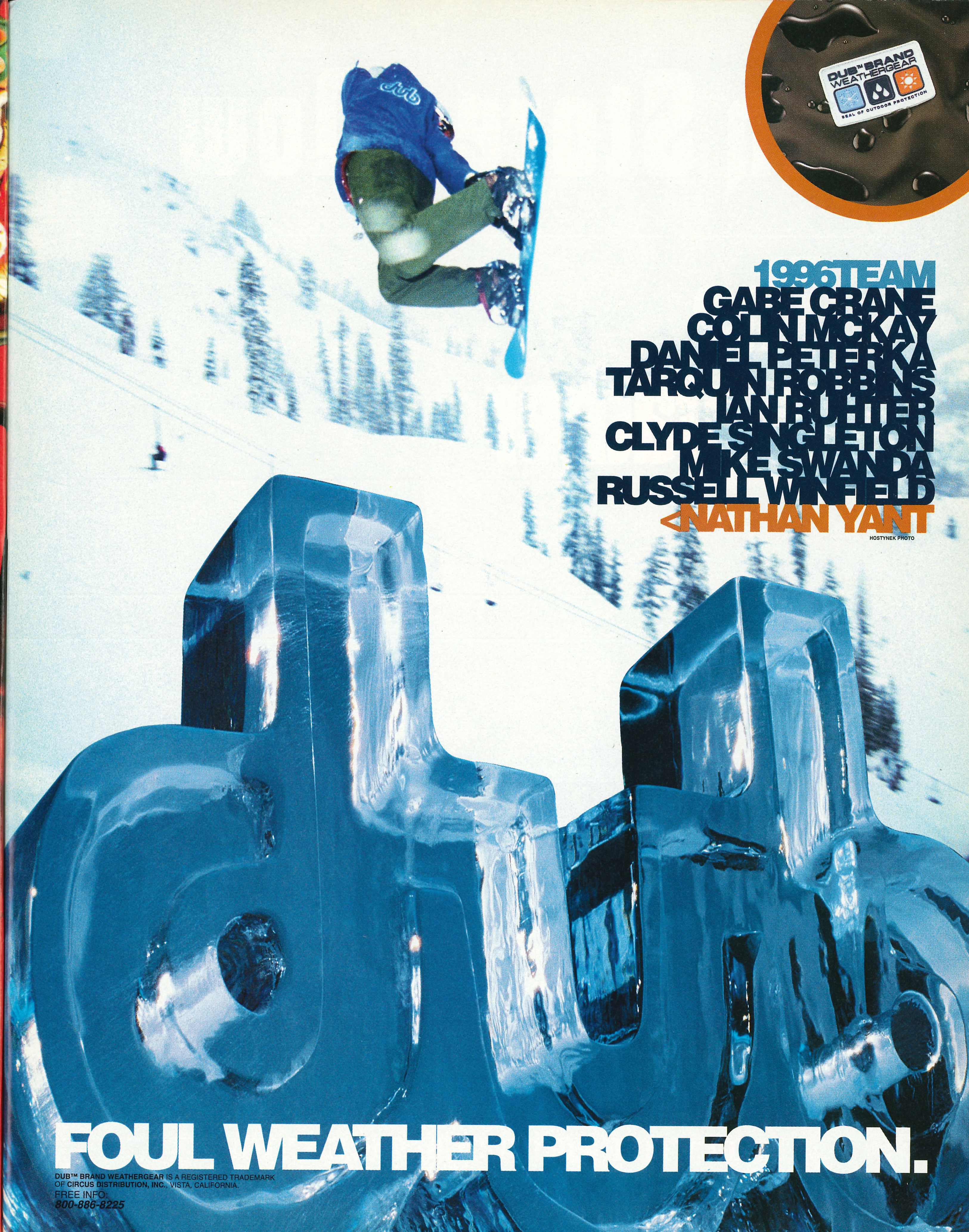

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THE SOURCE
THE MAGAZINE OF HIP-HOP MUSIC, CULTURE & POLITICS

JANUARY

FEATURES

25 THE NEWSMAKERS OF '96

Spanning the full range of music, culture and politics, the past year served us with more than a lil' bit of noteworthy happenings. Among the more prominent: we lost Tupac; Death Row lost Dre; and the South lost an unholy number of churches. Visualize and analyze as we look back on the most important moments in the Nine-Six.

49 THE ALL-SOURCE MIND SQUAD '96 PICKS

As the rap market becomes ever more saturated with sub-par lyrics, tired music, and ho-hum ideas, the select few who manage to bring the newness deserve to be recognized. We offer you our choices of the year's illest, largest and phattest!

74 THE HIP-HOP YEAR IN PHOTOS

76 THE GREAT PAPER CHASE

Long after the video stops playing, flashy images of the finer things in life—cash, cars, cuties—permeate our consciousness, helping us believe that all is lucrative in the entertainment biz. However, the financial stats say otherwise. This special year-end feature package brings you the actual facts on who's really signing the checks, who's making the power career moves, and who's amassing the ducats.

- *"Beyond The Coasts"*- A look into hip-hop's coastal/music chart rivalry.
- *"The Power 30"* - A listing of the most influential movers & shakers in hip-hop in '96.
- *"Where The Money's At"* - A regional breakdown of the top rap sales of '96.
- *"Gold & Platinum Awards"* - The year's overall top selling albums and singles.
- *"The Power Behind The Throne"* - Distribution's importance in rap music.
- *"Set It Off!"* - A step-by-step guide for amateurs on how to start a record label.
- *"It All Ads Up"* - Dissecting the use of hip-hop artists in today's big business advertising.
- *"State Of The Art"* - A hip-hop look into worlds of theater, art, jazz & literature.
- *"The Directors"* - An exclusive family portrait of our favorite directors.

DEPARTMENTS

15 EDITORIAL
18 THE SOURCE MIND SQUAD
62 THE 1996 SOURCE SYSTEM
63 FAT TAPE '96/QUOTABLE OF THE YEAR
67 STYLES OF THE SOURCE
115 COAST 2 COAST
126 REALITY CHECK
128 THE LAST WORD

COVER PHOTOS: TUPAC/DEATH ROW, FUGEES/CHRIS BUCK–OUTLINE, DR. DRE/JAY BLAKESBERG, BONE/REISIG & TAYLOR–OUTLINE, FOXY BROWN/MICHAEL LEVINE, LL COOL J/JOHN P. SALISBURY–OUTLINE, OUTKAST/JOHN HALPERN, JAY Z/SUE KWON, BUSTA RHYMES/JOHNATHON MANNION, CRUCIAL CONFLICT/DANIEL HASTINGS, LIL' KIM/ATLANTIC RECORDS, NAS/MARK SELIGER–OUTLINE
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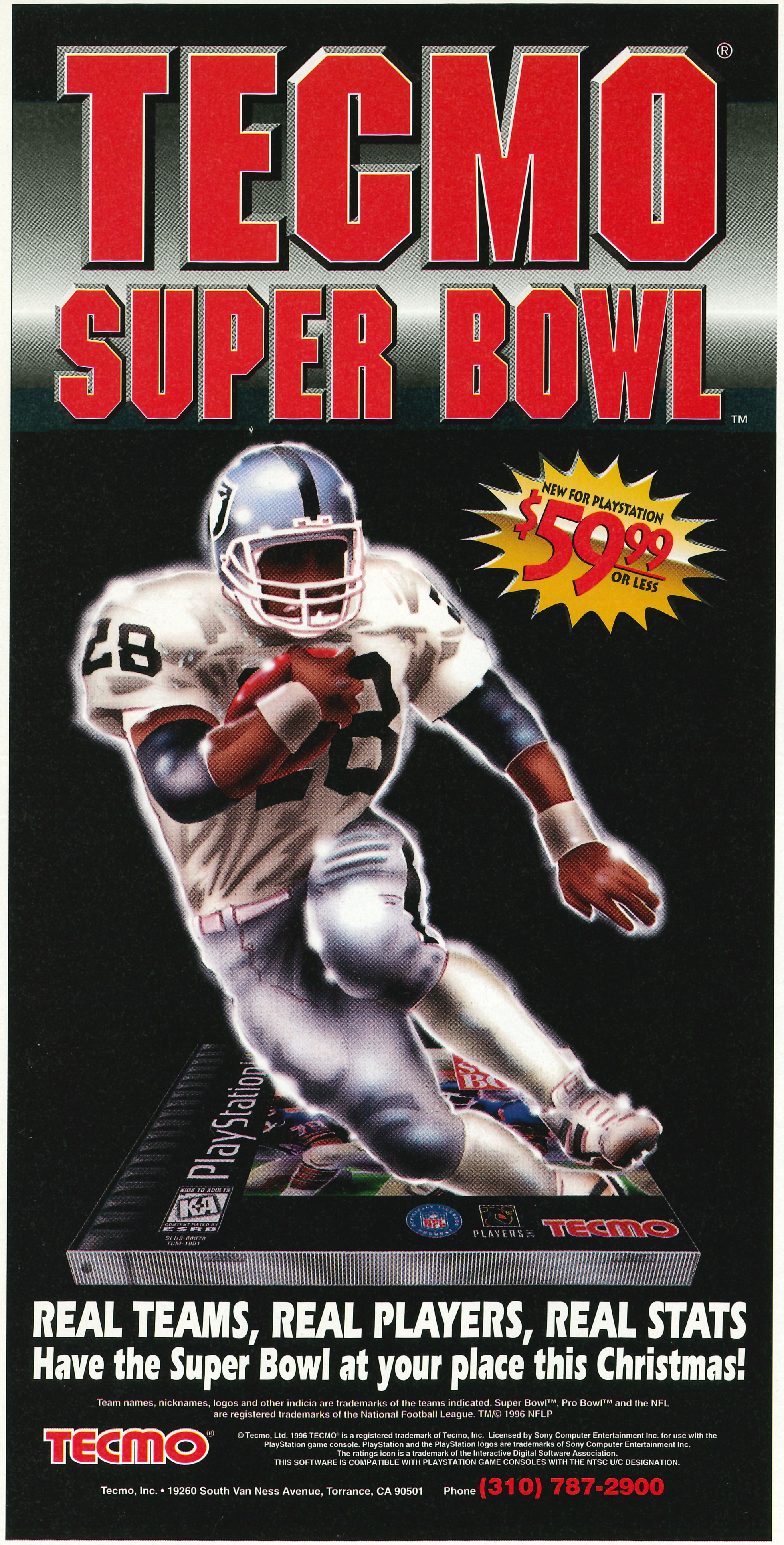
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We at THE SOURCE take very seriously the challenge of being the only independent voice for the Hip-Hop Nation. We strive hard to bring the reader a complete and unbiased representation of this incredible art form and all that surrounds it. With this in mind, we feel that it is important for our readers to be aware of the nature of our relationships with the rap industry.

We engage in business transactions with companies that are part of the rap music industry on two basic levels. Obviously, we accept advertising from such companies. Secondly, we at times are contracted by record companies to aid in the promotion of their product outside the direct channels of the magazine.

With respect to any of our business relationships, we feel it is our responsibility always to strictly police the integrity of our editorial content. Only in this way can we continue to bring to you the clear and unbiased coverage which we hope has won the respect of all of our readers.

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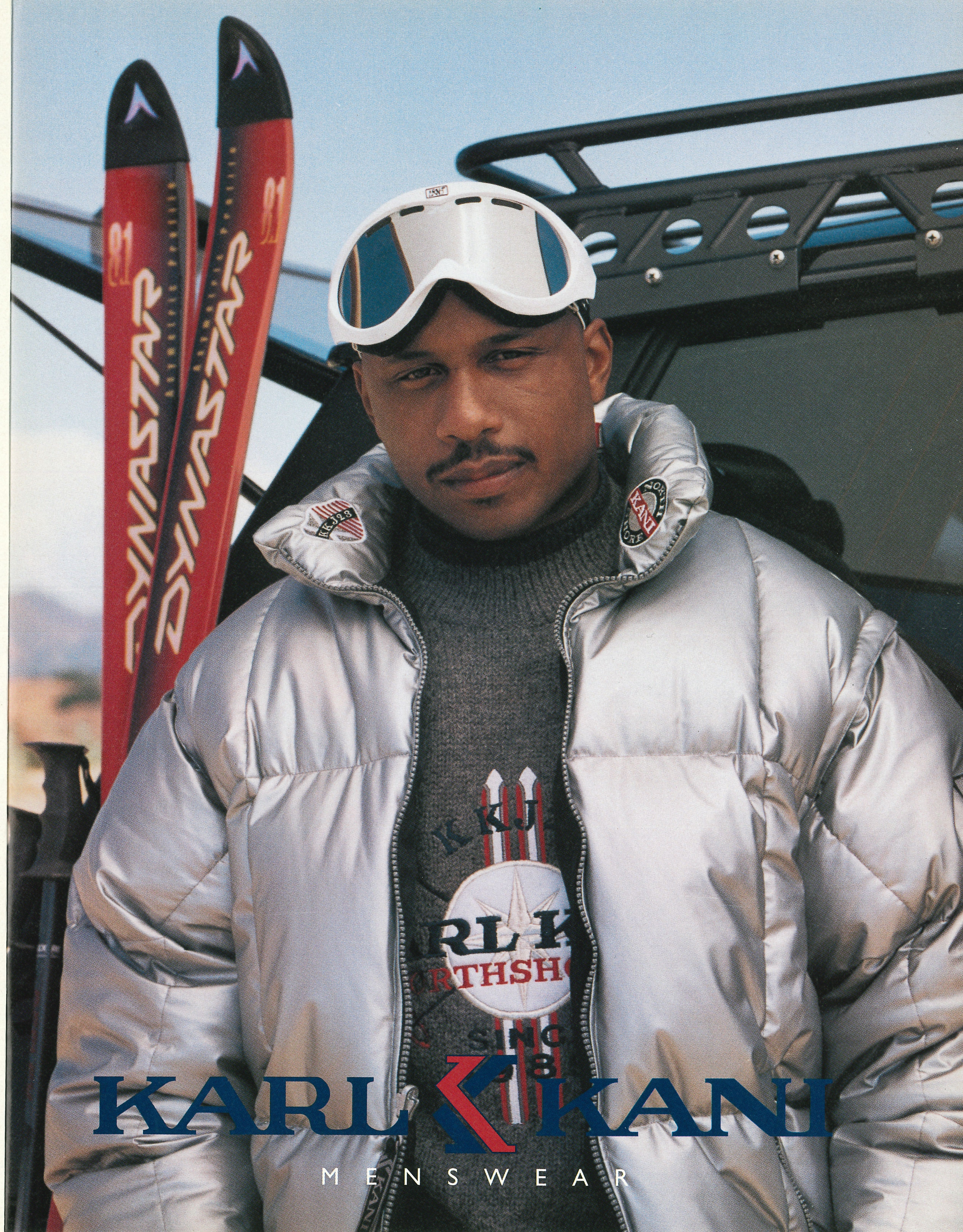

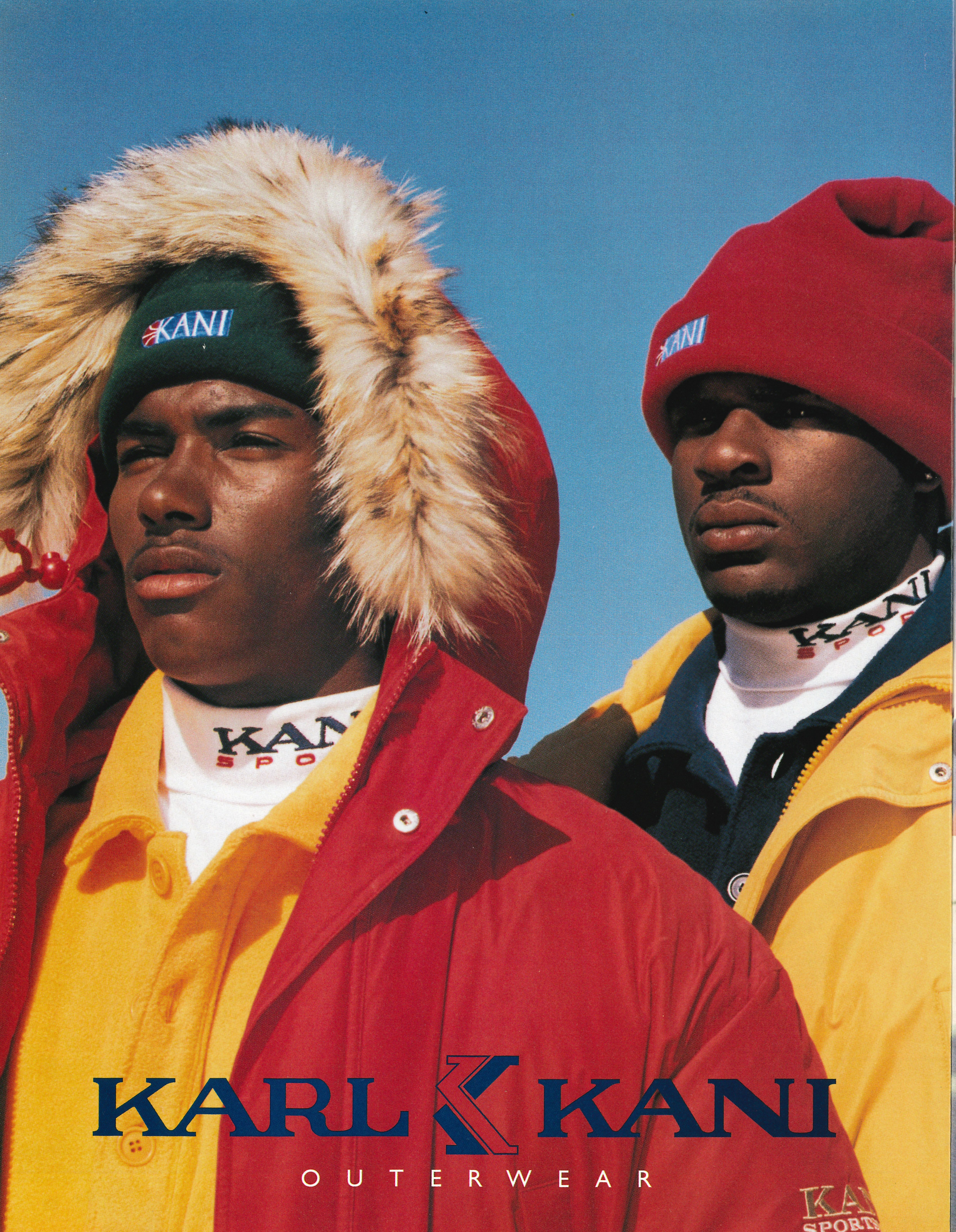
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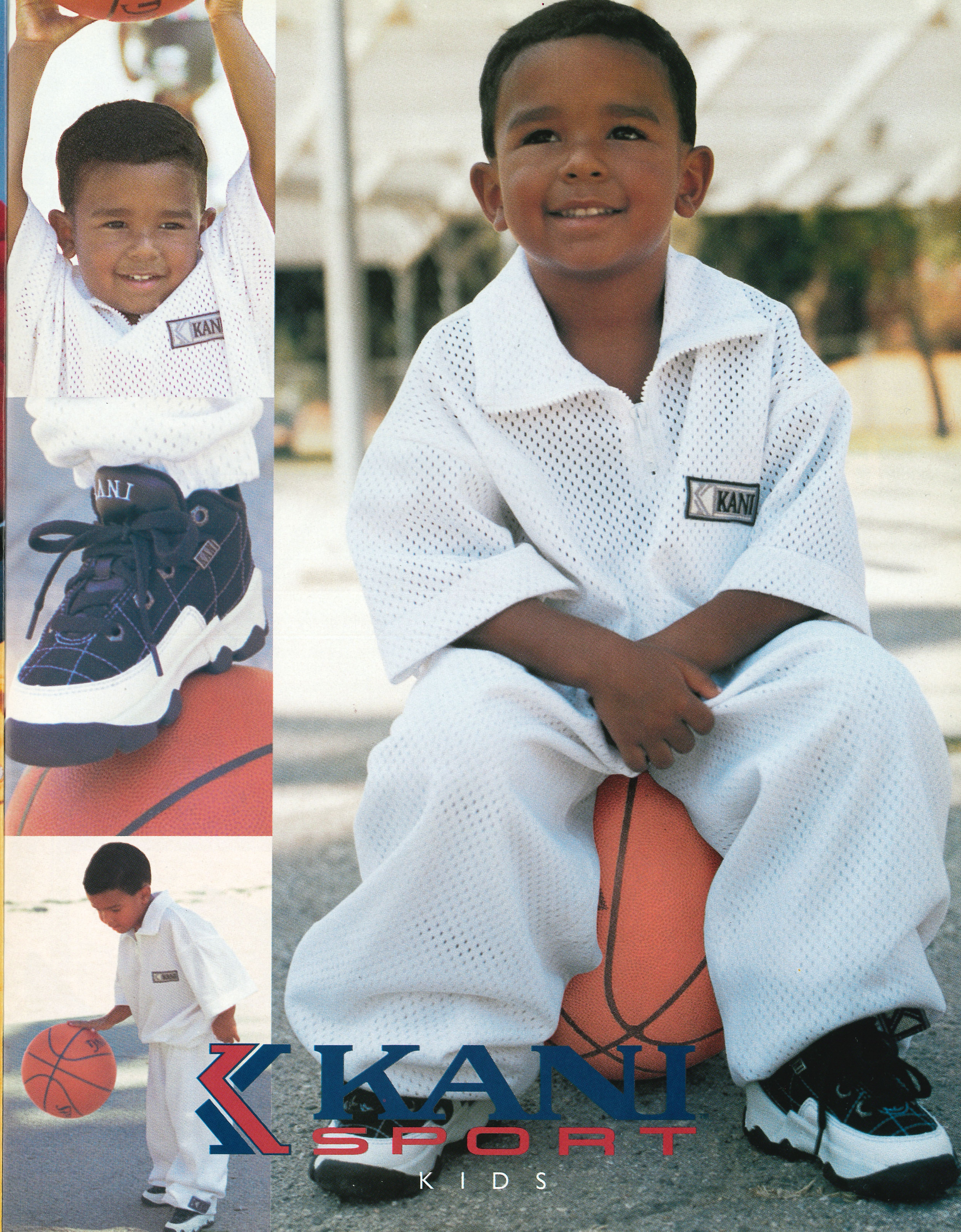
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EDITORIAL

THE TRUTH WILL MAKE YOU FREE, SOMETIMES

Wow! Not an understatement by any stretch of the imagination, "wow" just about sums up the impact of the myriad events of '96. It was a year of profound change for the Hip-Hop Nation as well as the world-at-large. More importantly, it turned out to be truth and revelation that took center stage.

The truth came to the fore as conservative candidate Bob Dole fell to an overwhelming defeat at the hands of newly re-elected President Bill Clinton. Revelation swept the poverty-torn streets of America as millions of have-nots realized that these days, based on the candidates' political platforms, there is very little difference between a Republican and a Democrat.

The truth did a James Brown slide out of the government's dark and musty closet as *The San Jose Mercury News* broke a story that revealed the CIA's alleged ties to the distribution of crack in America. Revelation smacked the shit out of numerous skeptics who had written-off as inane conspiracy theorists the scholars, political scientists and activists who'd professed the government's guilt all along.

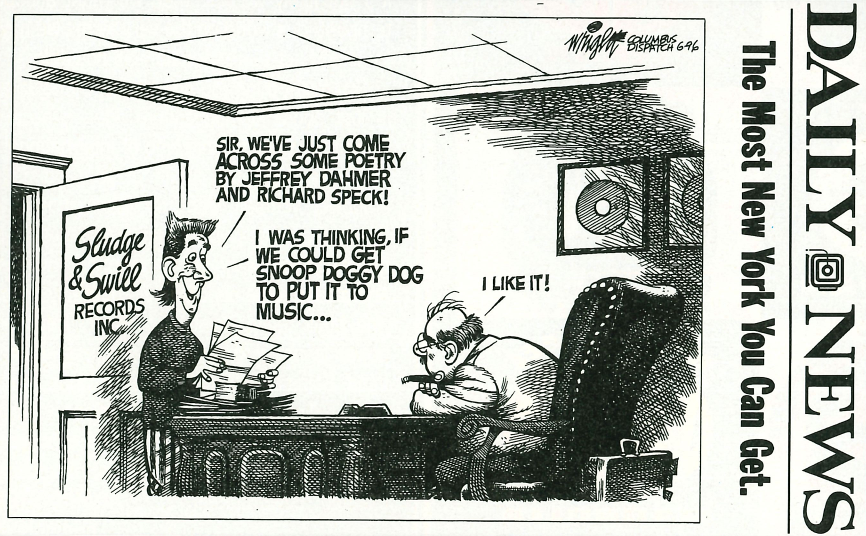
Corporate America was forced to take the truth serum as it was revealed that top level Texaco executives engaged in racist business practices. Less shocking was the revelation that even in 1996, Texaco was probably not alone in its racial politics.

The truth surrounding the meaning of Tupac's death and the individual behind it still remains to be seen. The startling revelation came in the form of numerous hypocritical Tupac critics switching sides and giving him love after his death, suddenly finding the religion of forgiveness and understanding *after* the individual passed.

The truth of the East Coast/West Coast's trivial place in history reared its conflicted head when the music and rhyme style on Ice Cube's Westside Connection album actually overshadowed the "East Coast is wack" content. The revelation: good music resides on no particular coast in the world.

Often, the bitter pill of truth must be swallowed at the very worst moments in our lives. This was the case for two winners turned unwitting underdogs in the forms of Mike Tyson and Suge Knight. Confident and imposing Tyson met Evander Holyfield in a championship boxing match that had Tyson as much as a 25 to 1 favorite to win. In an historic upset, Tyson closed the night on his knees...humbled. The revelation felt by all the Tyson="gangsta rap bad guy" vs. Holyfield="Black holy boy" commentators, is that despite all the negative boos and hisses leveled at Tyson during the fight, and despite the questions surrounding his "lack of heart" or "moral character," Tyson stood in front of the cameras of the world and humbly, almost courageously, accepted defeat like a gentleman.

Suge Knight's icy gaze was forced to look into the stolid eyes of truth that stared at him even as he was escorted into a Los Angeles jail cell, serving time for a parole violation. Shackled and dressed in jailhouse blues, Suge appeared on ABC's *Primetime Live* and defended his lifestyle and his life. With incriminating interviews with Vanilla Ice and Jerry Heller in tow, Suge was asked in front of the world to account for what Ice and Heller described as his bent toward vio-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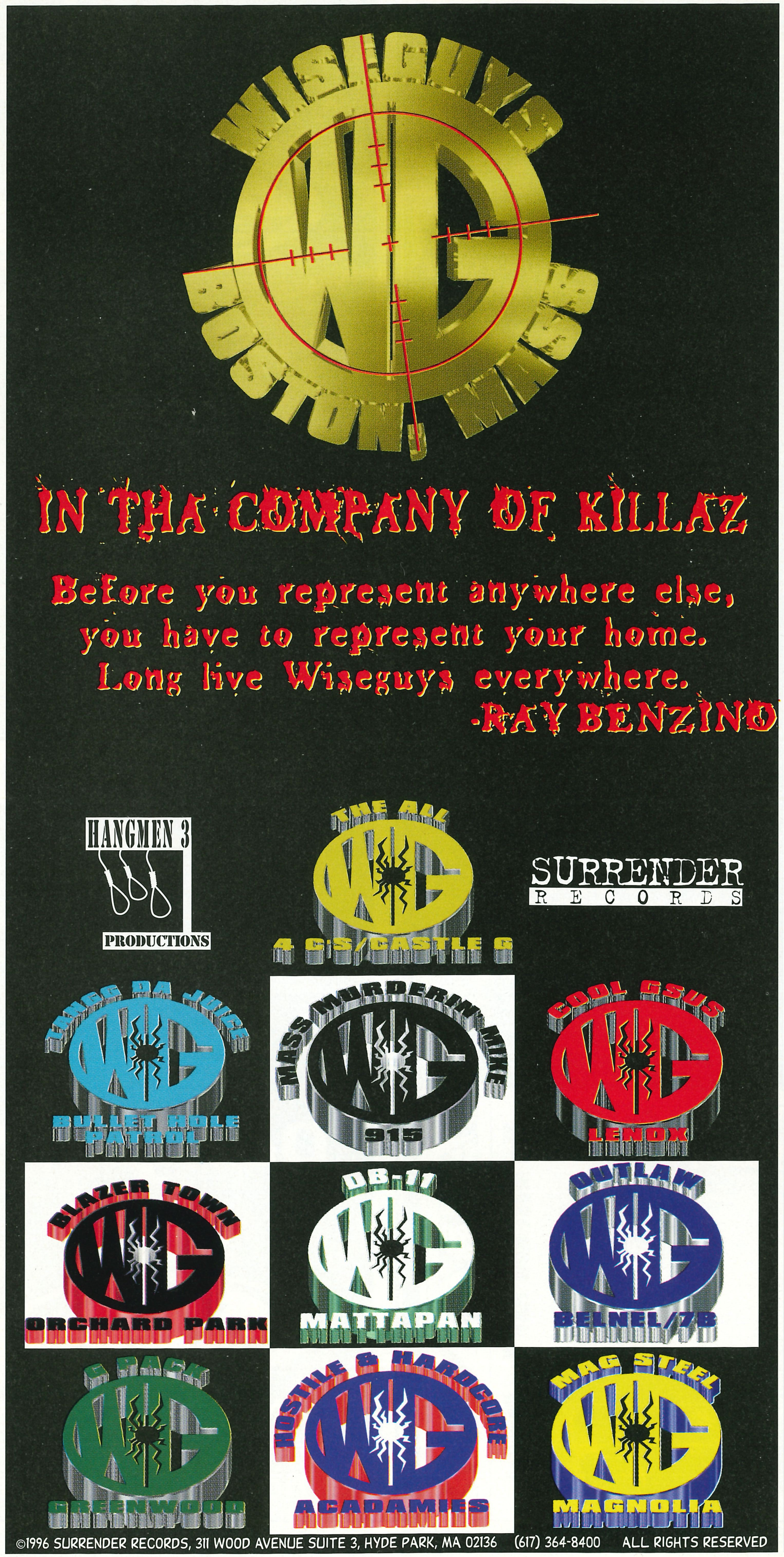
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lent gangster business tactics. With a slight sheen of sweat covering his bald head, Knight, facing 9 years in prison, laughed the allegations off as untrue. The revelation: *someone* isn't telling the truth about a lot of things, and when the truth *is* revealed...whew!

The lighter side of reality came sashaying into our bedrooms in the form of soul music's resurgence courtesy of D'Angelo, Tony Toni Toné, Jamiroquai and Erykah Badu. That we allowed people to diss the soul and disco music of the late '70s and early '80s is a revelation of error many of us had a long time ago.

Hip-hop music's reality check is still on artificial respiration and hasn't been able to keep down any solid food. Musically and lyrically rich records like *Money B Presents Folk Music* by Money B and Digital Underground, *Illadelphalflife* by The Roots, and *Soul On Ice* by Ras Kass are continuing to be ignored. Thankfully, the performances of groups like The Fugees seem to serve as decent indicators that a waking revelation is on the way for hip-hop en masse.

Finally, what crept into our collective consciousness was a universal truth that seems to have the nation in a stranglehold. That truth speaks to the loss of innocence we have encountered as a species as we grow older on this planet. As the human race ages, it is becoming increasingly difficult to deny the monstrous evil that is our own dark side and not some provocative, demonic outside force. Our own news media reveals to us daily the new levels of societal, inter-personal, economic and political atrocities we commit against each other everyday. And it seems that the children are becoming smarter at a younger age lately. No. They are being stripped of their innocence earlier; a necessity for this new world which appears to have entered a new cultural, and some say environmental, Dark Ages.

The revelation that we must all come to, grade school children to senior citizens, is that we have taken our world to a strange place far from its original point. If we do not make the drastic changes needed to bring ourselves back now, and it's not likely we will, then we must accept this tempestuous world on the very terms we have set for it and act as responsibly as possible.

You might think you are reading a magazine that is just about hip-hop culture. Please believe me when I tell you that this kind of informational interaction is about the future of *your* world. If you empower yourself with the information that we attempt to bring to you, you may find that the power to change your world will become that much easier. And please remember, it isn't about any one magazine, book, television show, or expert. Realizing your power is about the thought process—using your mind. Being an intellect-driven person is something which will change you from a reactionary victim into a proactive leader. And if you lead right, you'd be surprised at how many people just may follow your example. Love yourself. **ADARIO STRANGE**

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FEB. 1996, #77
MAR. 1996, #78
APR. 1996, #79
MAY. 1996, #80
JUN. 1996, #81
JUL. 1996, #82
AUG. 1996, #83
SEP. 1996, #84
OCT. 1996, #85
NOV. 1996, #86
DEC. 1996, #87
JAN. 1997, #88
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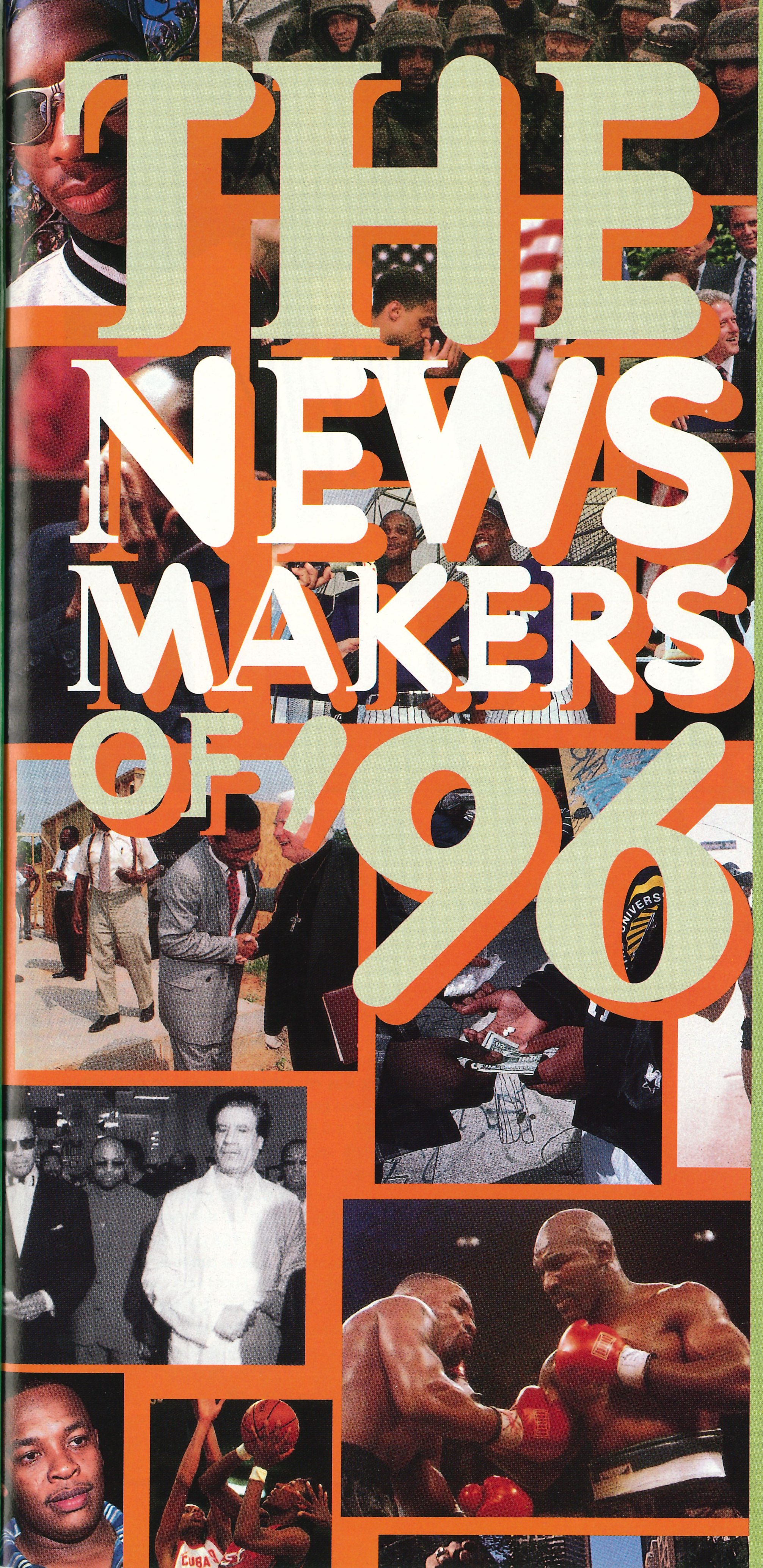


The year of 1996 will definitely go down in the history books as a year of change. Ground-breaking change was evident in the economic, social, political and artistic arenas of our world. Whether it was the reelection of Democratic President Bill Clinton defeating ultra-conservative Bob Dole; the world-shocking heavyweight boxing win of Evander Holyfield over Mike Tyson; or the previously "underground" Fugees breaking the '5 million records sold' barrier–this year was full of surprises. Here we take a look back at some of the highs and lows that we experienced as a nation in 1996.

1996 AT A GLANCE

Jan Terry McMillan's *Waiting To Exhale* debuts. The film, starring Angela Bassett, Whitney Houston, Loretta Devine and Lela Rochon, is directed by Forest Whitaker. Black women turn out in a wave of support that raises Hollywood's eyebrows.

Jan 1 US Army deploys troops for Bosnia mission.

Jan 2 Jesse Jackson, Jr. is sworn in as new member of Congress after winning the special House election in December 1995. The seat was previously held by Mel Reynolds, who was indicted and sentenced to prison for obstruction of justice and statutory rape.

Jan 5 Hammer signs with Death Row Records.

Jan 8 First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton appears before a Whitewater federal grand jury.

Jan 12 Emmitt Smith, running back for the Dallas Cowboys, rushes for his 25th touchdown of the season during the Cowboys' final game, setting a new NFL season record.

Jan 25 Heavy D is named president of Uptown Records. Previously, he was Vice President of A&R, responsible for signing Soul For Real and Monifah.

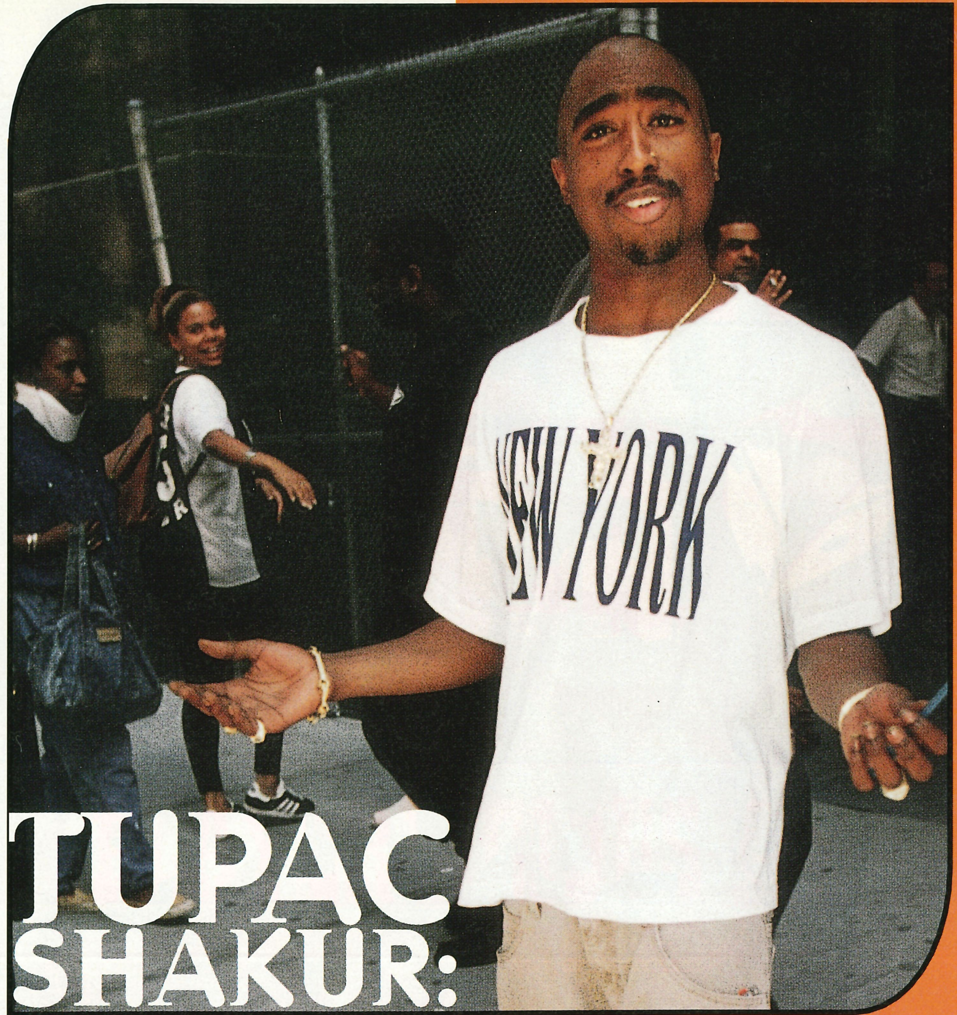
Jan 27 Rap-A-Lot Records celebrates its tenth year in existence. As a gift to itself, the Houston-based label launches a subsidiary called Sing-A-Lot Records, designed to cater to R&B heads.

Jan 30 In an effort to redeem themselves from their failing tough-guy strategy, the Republican Congress avoids a third government shutdown.

Jan 30 Earvin "Magic" Johnson returns to the NBA's Los Angeles Lakers for the second time.

Feb 1 Making more court appearances than Snoop Doggy Dogg, Hillary Rodham Clinton faces yet another federal grand jury.

Feb 3 Queen Latifah is arrested in Los Angeles county for carrying a .38-caliber pistol, and for possession of marijuana. She later pleads no contest.



AP WIDEWORLD

TUPAC SHAKUR: 1971-1996

Love him or hate him, the fact is clear: the Hip-Hop Nation lost one of its most important voices when Tupac Shakur passed away on September 13, 1996 from gunshot wounds suffered a week earlier on a Las Vegas strip. An engaging vocalist with a haunting, baritone lilt, Tupac will be remembered for his tumultuous, highly successful and tragically brief career.

With his five albums (including his recent *Makaveli* release), many soundtrack appearances, and a number of acclaimed guest appearances on the recordings of others, Tupac compiled an enduring body of work that spanned a range of emotional complexity, from the heartwarming sentiment of "Dear Mama" to the venomous "Hit Em Up." But despite their particular emotive quality, Pac's work consistently provoked thought and created controversy.

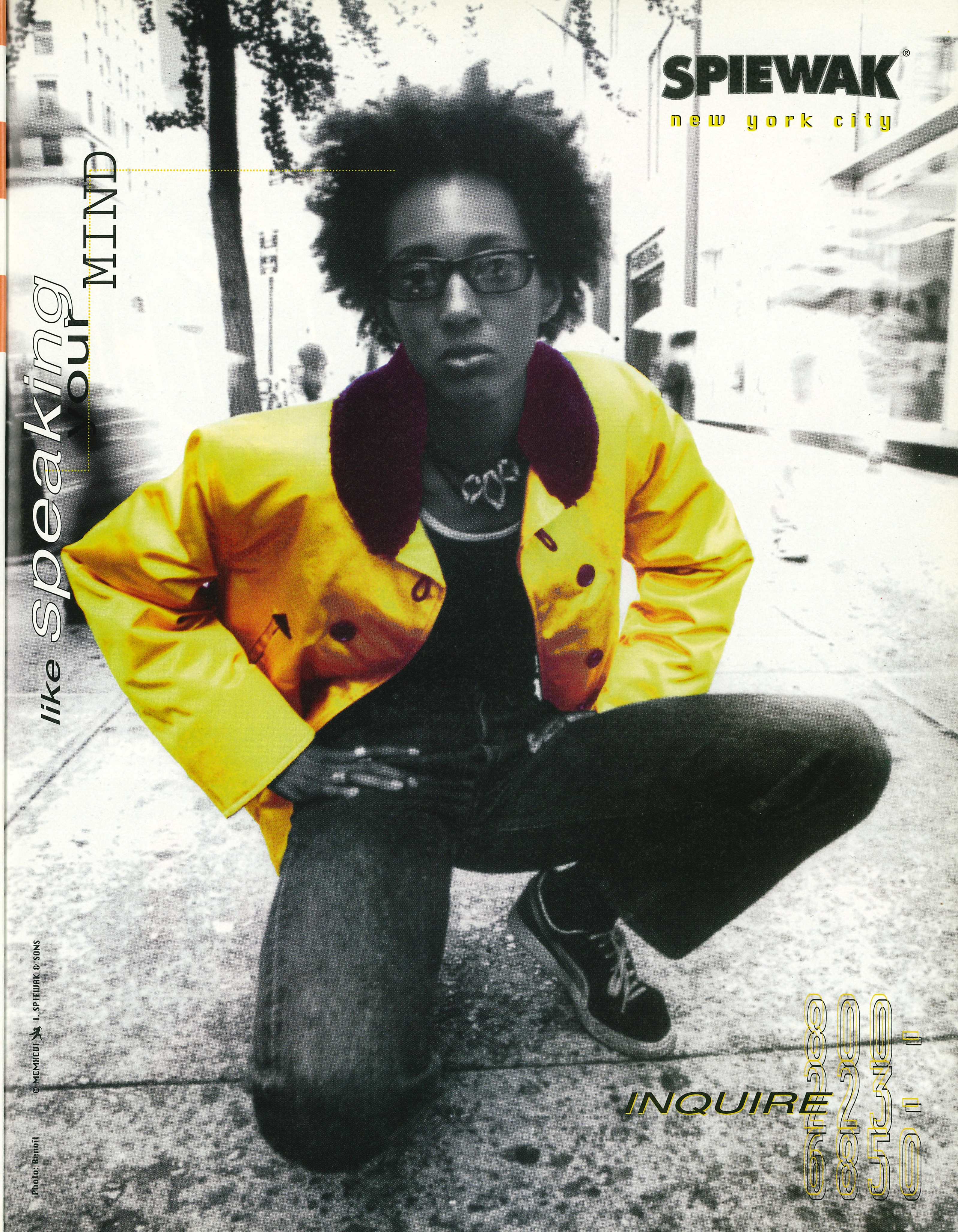
From the beginning, Pac's material incited reaction and caught the attention of outside forces. In 1992, his debut, *2Pacalypse Now,* came under fire from former Vice President Dan Quayle when a Texas state trooper was allegedly gunned down by a teenager who was listening to the record at the time. While it's completely outrageous to blame one man's actions on the music he listens to, this incident is symbolic of the main reason why Pac's work will be revered by many for years to come: good, bad, confused or crystal clear, Pac's work generated an impact like few others.

Rap is about communication and no one was able to grab your attention with words better than Tupac Shakur. It was impossible to turn a deaf ear to this man's voice. For better or worse, he gave it his all in each and every record session. Passion, confusion, anger—he conveyed all these emotions, sometimes all at once. Indeed, one could never feel short-changed by Pac's music and its sheer emotive bombardment on the senses.

Pac was no angel, but he was no devil, either. There was good *and* bad in him, a balance present in each and every one of us. He was brutally honest and as imperfect as any human being. Although he sometimes appeared to contradict himself, you knew that his emotions were always genuine at the time of the recording.

While he probably will be remembered by many for his role in rap's coastal conflicts, Tupac Shakur never really hated the East Coast. Take a listen to "Old School," a track from *Me Against The World* which revealed his respect for this music's founding fathers, as evidence that he was honored to be a part of this culture and movement that began in the '70s in the Bronx, NY.

1995 saw the passing of Eazy E from AIDS, and gunfire took Tupac in 1996. Let's hope that in 1997 we do not lose another one of our soldiers. Live in peace. **ELLIOT WILSON**



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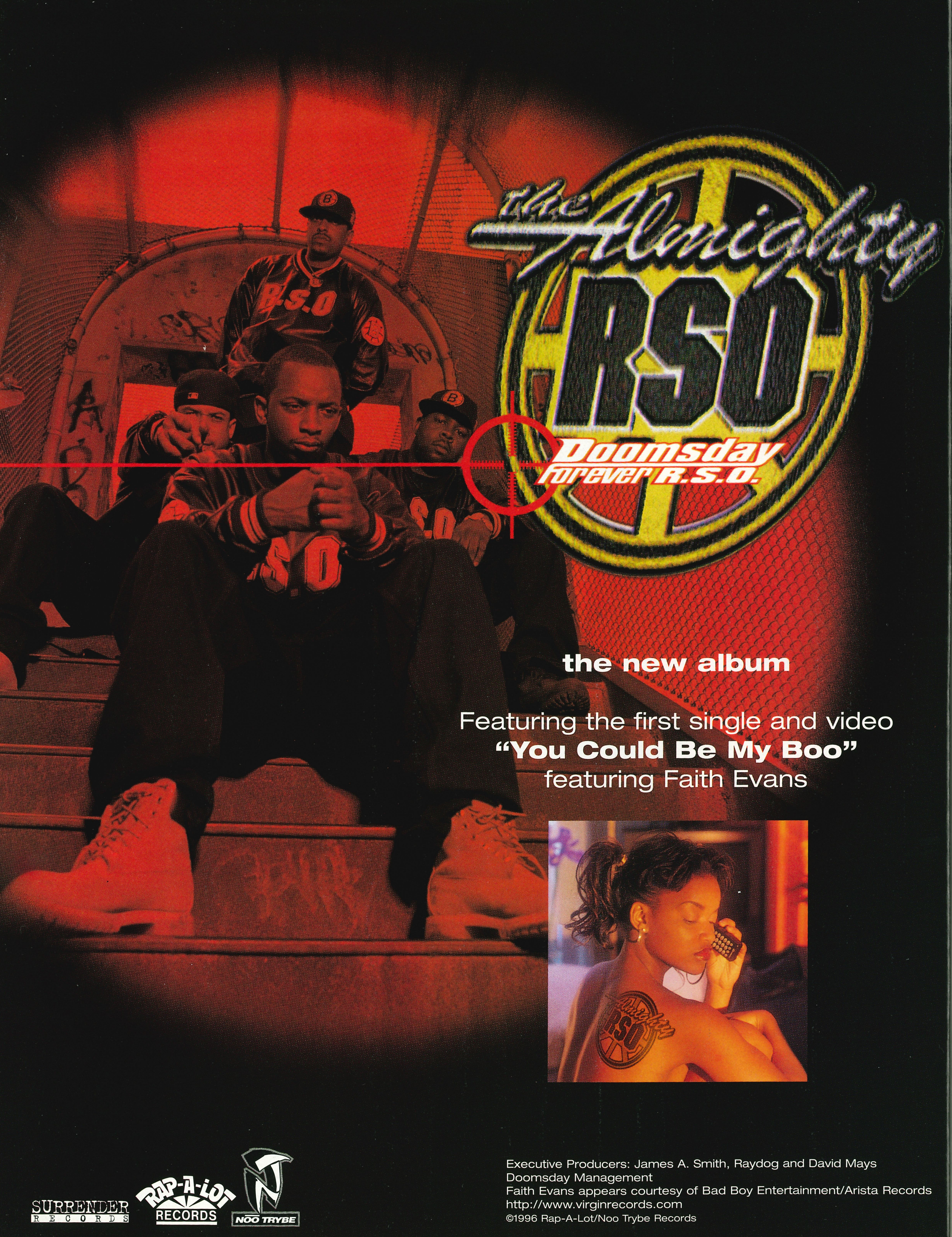

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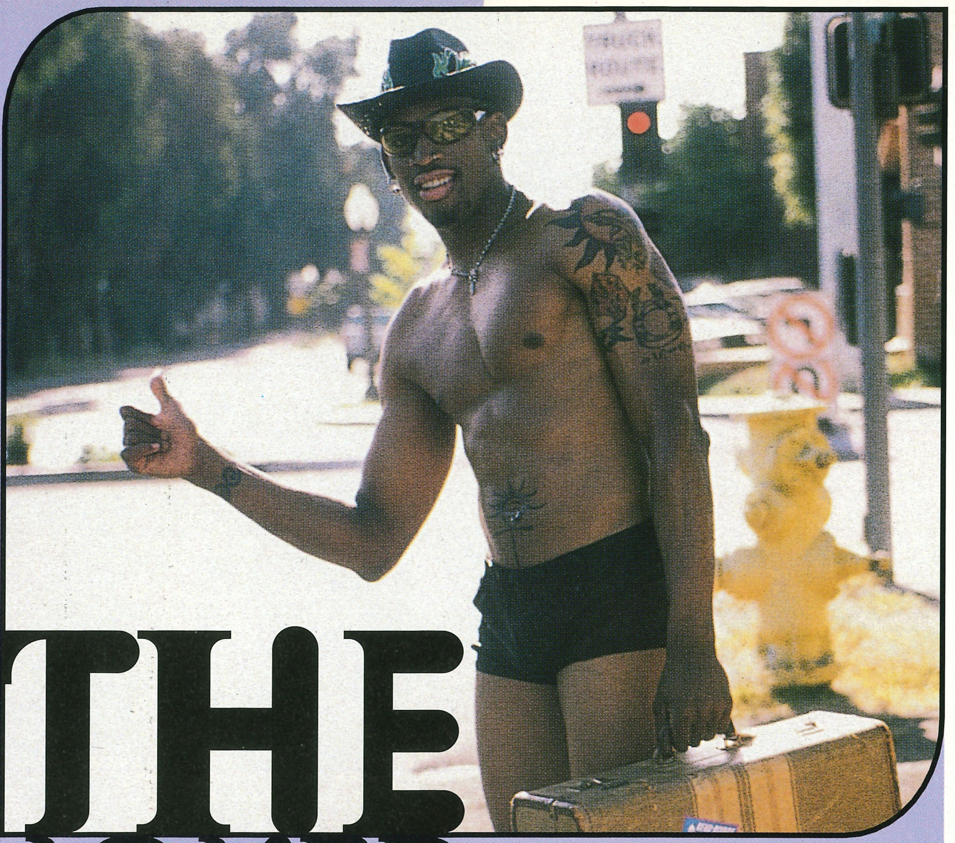


THE JOKER

DENNIS RODMAN

Define mad. Some say angry, others will say crazy. To be mad with purpose *and* have that madness under control is rare. In 1996, Dennis Rodman got mad. He started out the year with dyed red hair engraved in the back with a black Chicago Bulls logo. But by year's end, the only bull on Dennis' body rested on his finger in the form of a diamond championship ring.

Define blow up. For an entire year Dennis Rodman had the whole country waiting. Waiting to inhale. "What's he gonna do next!?" During the Chicago Bulls' 89-game run he took on all comers, led the league in rebounding, head-butted a ref, and got 'cheated' out of a Finals MVP. His autobiographical book, *Bad As I Wanna Be*, took people places they'd never been as he became the biggest selling sports author in history. While he continued to grow, it became increasingly evident that from his brief relationship with Madonna he got more than some ass... he also learned how to maximize gains from a society wanting something extra. Sell yourself, but never sell out.

A few more tattoos and one more nose ring later, Dennis Rodman turned himself from cult hero to pulp-God. He turned an entire sub-culture pop by making Black grunge acceptable. His emotional appearance as a guest on *Oprah* made the world sit and listen. His cameo in Victoria's Secret's perfect bra commercial made sense. His spread in *Playboy* worked. But that wasn't enough.

Inside, his wheels are still turning. More tricks up his sleeve. Presto! He announces on "Late Night with David Letterman" that he's getting married in New York. Thousands show up on the "wedding day," the media goes nuts, and the nation's on buzz as he strolls down to a book signing dressed in a white wedding gown, prepared to marry the only person in the world capable of spending the rest of their life with this man... himself.

Through all of this nonsense and intelligence, Dennis Rodman found a home in Chicago. The city opened its arms to a young man who often contemplated suicide. Nobody understood. For the first time in his life he felt that understanding. A love affair started with the city and by July he signed a contract for $9 million to keep him in town for another year.

MTV gave him his own show, *World Tour*, and he'll flex his "perfect bod" on the big screen with Van Damme next summer. So intact is Dennis' game that he even brought a date to the Bulls' 1996 media day. The date was a dog. But it's behind the facade where the truth in Rodman's life lies. Rewind to the last five minutes on *Oprah*, when he broke down in tears at the mention of not being allowed to see his daughter. In an age where a picture has been painted of Black men running *away* from their responsibilities, here is a brother who openly yearns for his child. He wants to do right, but he's prevented.

Follow Rodman for any amount of time and you'll realize that in addition to being a basketball player, media darling, book author, NBA enigma, superstar, and household name, he desperately wants to be a father. As a Black man, even as one with the world on a string, he learned that some things are hard to earn. Define genius.

SCOOP JACKSON

RODMAN/MTV, SNOOP/AP WIDEWORLD

1996 AT A GLANCE

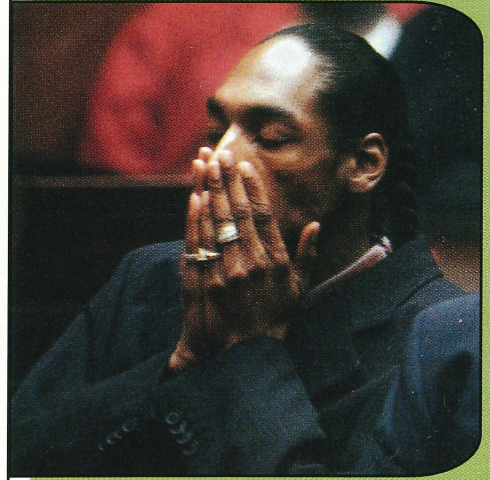
Feb 7 Rene Preval succeeds Jean-Bertrand Aristide as president of Haiti, winning with over 87 percent of the vote.

Feb 15 Black Entertainment Television celebrates its 15th anniversary.

Feb 17 MCA Music purchases interest in Interscope Records.

Feb 21 After twenty-seven minutes of deliberation, a Richmond, Texas jury acquits Minnesota Vikings star quarterback Warren Moon. Moon was charged with assaulting his wife, but she refused to testify against him.

Feb 21 Snoop Doggy Dogg is acquitted of murder after a judge declares a mistrial. The jury was deadlocked.



Feb 21 Black Civil Rights enforcer Deval L. Patrick tells House Judiciary Committee that no evidence exists to link the dozens of church firebombings over the past six years to any type of conspiracy.

Feb 24 Farrakhan returns to US from his "World Friendship Tour" of the Middle East and Africa. He announces that Libyan leader Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi vowed to launch a $1 billion fund for him [Farrakhan] to sway elections and thus US foreign policy.

Feb 28 The Grammys give up awards to Coolio for best rap solo, Naughty by Nature for best rap album, and Mary J. Blige and Method Man for best duo or group single.

Mar 2 After one week, Tupac's *All Eyez On Me* sells over 500,000 copies.

Mar 3 Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Michael Irvin is arrested after being found by police in a hotel room with large quantities of cocaine and marijuana, and two topless dancers.

Mar 4 With Columbia Records as a distributor, Chuck D starts rap label "Slam Jamz."

1996 AT A GLANCE

Mar 10 Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf of the Denver Nuggets is suspended for not standing during the national anthem. After days of heated, national debate, as well as closed door negotiations with the NBA, he agrees to uphold his contract. By the year's end, Denver bids him farewell.

Mar 11 Kweisi Mfume is sworn in as President and CEO of the NAACP at the US Justice Department's Great Hall of Justice. Mfume vows to bring about sweeping changes in the 87-year-old civil rights organization.

Mar 19 The 38-year-old marriage of Nelson and Winnie Mandela ends with a Johannesburg judge granting Nelson Mandela's petition for divorce. Winnie is denied the $5.5 million requested in divorce settlement.

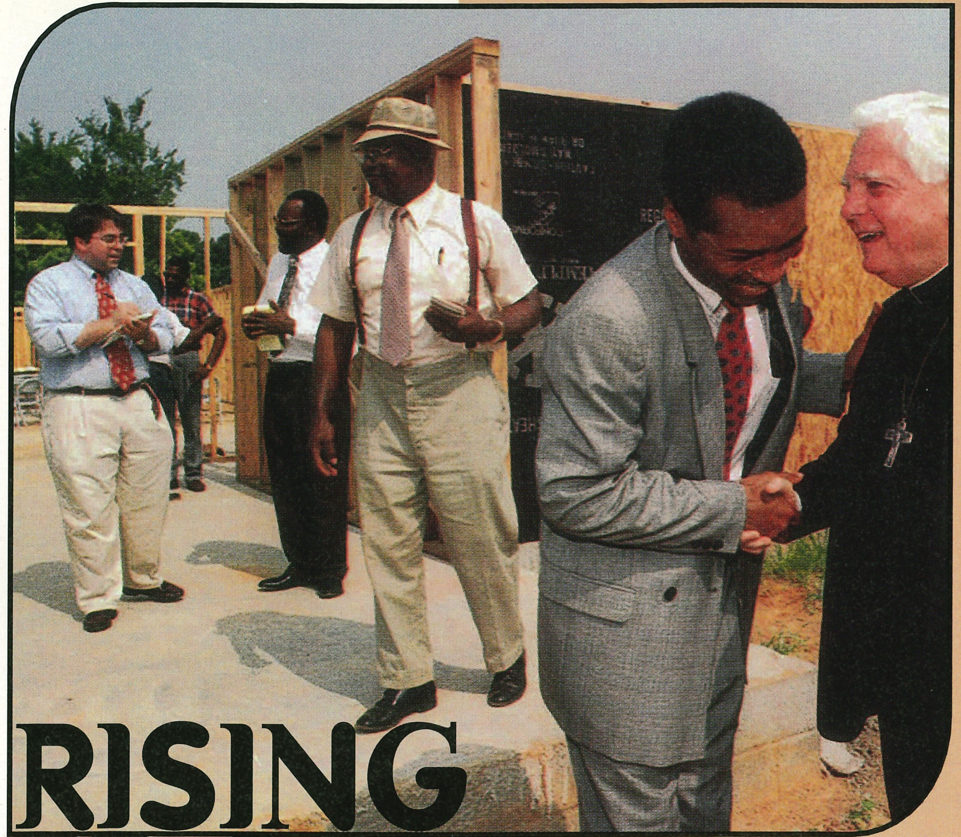
Mar 25 The Reverend Jesse Jackson organizes a demonstration against the Academy Awards ceremony because of the lack of minority nominations for awards. The protest only receives a small buzz in the media.

Apr Hammer files for federal bankruptcy protection in Oakland, California.

Apr 3 Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown and 34 other individuals die in a plane crash in the mountains over Croatia.

Apr 4 Rapper Tupac Shakur is sentenced to 120 days in jail for violating probation on an assault and battery conviction.

Apr 6 The 27th Annual NAACP Music Awards take place in Pasadena, CA.



RISING FROM THE ASHES

BLACK CHURCH FIRES SCORCHED THE NATION. THE AFTERMATH MAY HAVE REKINDLED THE DREAM.

Ironically, one of the legacies of a year marked by the first decline in violent crimes in ten years, may be the southern Black church burnings of 1996. National coverage of the rash of fires last summer slowly evaporated from news headlines as one news report after another declared that the fires were not the result of a racist conspiracy. Conspiracy withstanding, before all was said and done, those on the frontline of this struggle backseated theory to action.

Much like the mythical phoenix rose from the ashes, the catastrophe has spawned one of the most significant dialogues between the races in years. Following the lead of The Movement of Racial Conciliation, a non-denominational venture that raised $5 million in funds and building supplies and then donated an estimated $75,000 to each of the 76 houses of worship that were destroyed since 1995, countless volunteers rose to the occasion.

Reverend Keith Ratliff, pastor of the Maple Street Baptist Church in Des Moines, Iowa, led a group of 30 volunteers to Tennessee to participate in week-long rebuilding efforts at Salem Baptist Church in Fruitland and Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Tigrett. The volunteers, a coalition of all races, traveled twelve hours by road. "We wanted to show the perpertrators that people of all colors and denominations can work together," said Ratliff, who is also head of the Des Moines NAACP. "They may burn down the physical structure but they won't burn down our spirit."

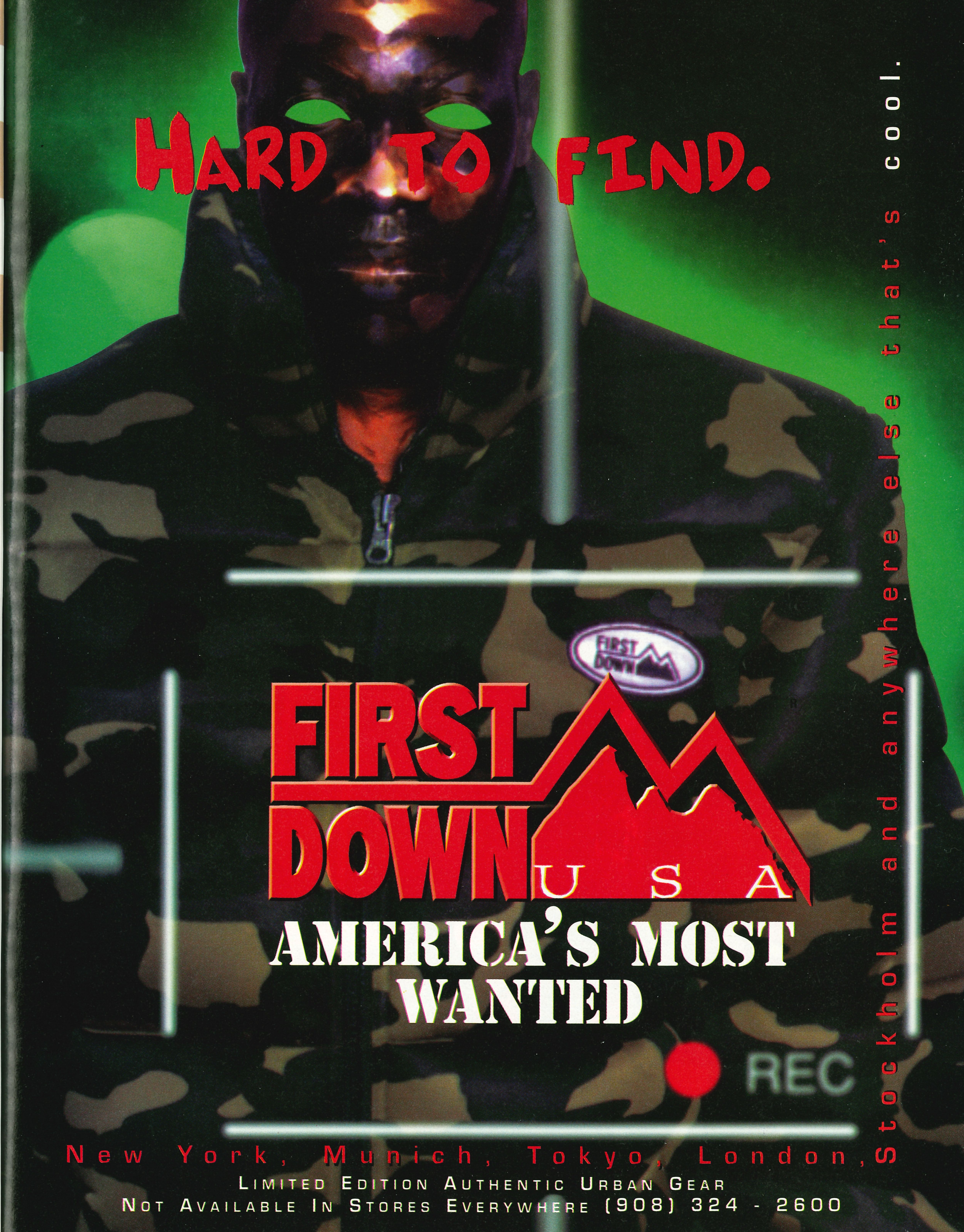
Four leading human rights groups also heard the calling. The National Urban League, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the National Council of La Raza, and the National Council of Churches got together to form "Bigotry Watch," to assist the refurbishing efforts of devastated churches. "The movement to rebuild the churches is the biggest step [in race relations] in years," said Noah Chandler from the Center for Democratic Renewal, which tracks white supremacy groups.

However, the meshing of unrelated groups in a common cause may be one of the only blessings to come from these ungodly acts of vandalism. According to a recent report issued by the US Commission of Civil Rights, the region about 100 miles west of Montgomery, Alabama still remains a hotbed of racial strife and segregation. Convened in response to the fires, the Commission held community forums in Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana and Tennessee, and challenged the governors of those states to meet with them on the issue.

Commission Chair Mary Frances Berry said she was encouraged by the racial unity displayed in rebuilding the churches. "We intend to press and press until we get a plan of action," she said. "You cannot become depressed and simply give up over those who are overtly racist in their behavior. You have to go with the people who are willing to begin a process of change."

STEVE WALKER

AP WIDEWORLD



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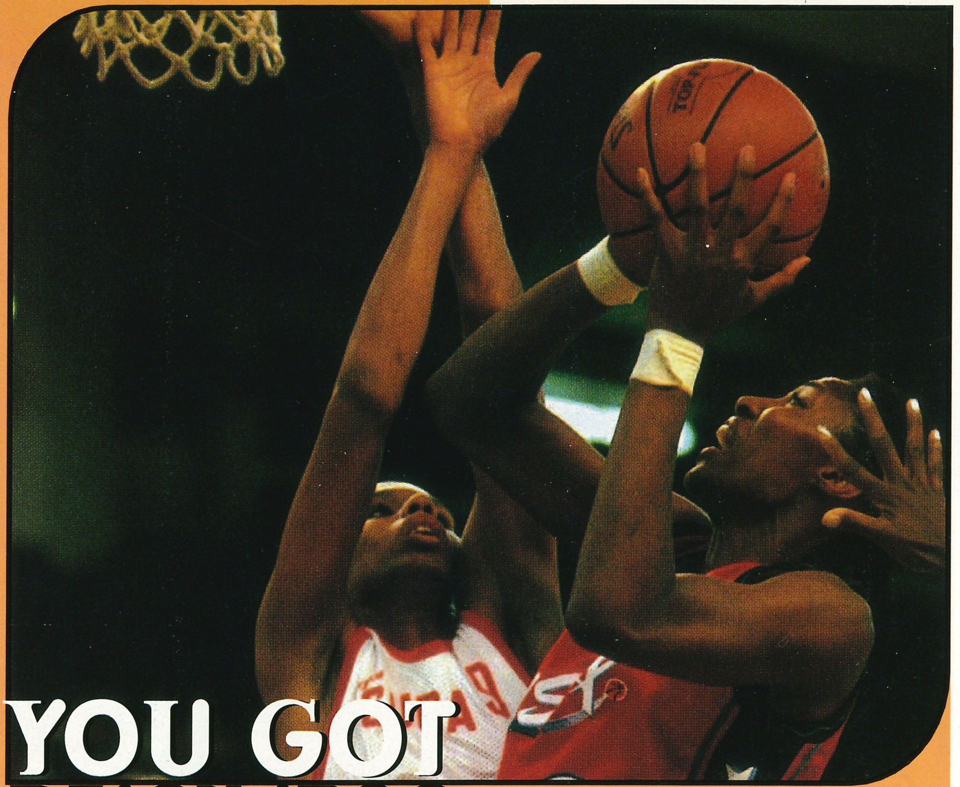


AP WIDEWORLD

YOU GOT BUSINESS HERE?

THE OLYMPICS COME TO ATLANTA

This summer the Olympics invaded Atlanta, and for a minute the world was looking at the southern metropolis as the place to be. Millions of people from every country on the planet converged on the city and spent cream beyond belief. Yet somehow, through a series of brand new ordinances and required permits, local Black businesses were virtually shut out of the biggest money-making opportunity Atlanta has ever seen. *That* is the most important thing that went on during the Olympics.

It was so important that it's what I was thinking about when the women's basketball team completed their 80-0 run and won the gold. Dawn Staley's crisp no-look passes and Lisa Leslie's domination under the glass helped lead the team to their astonishing record and helped spur this new women's basketball league.

The "no Black business" thing ran across my head while Dominique Dawes was doing her thing on the uneven bars and the floor exercises. The US women won a gold medal in team competition, despite being heavy underdogs. And when Kerri Strug made that final jump on her badly injured ankle, gymnastics became the biggest deal in sports. Bigger than the Superbowl or the World Series (well, maybe not the World Series).

It seemed like the Dream Team did more politicking than ball-playin'. Every day it was something, and everything was a media circus. Along the way they managed to breeze through the competition and win the gold, but if you left it up to NBC, they'd have just done public relations things and never actually played ball. When they did have a game you could be sure that NBC would air the first five minutes of it before switching to a feature on Kerri Strug's parents or something, never to return.

It was nice to see that boxing kid, Antonio Tarver, battle back from a crack addiction and win a medal. Just when everything was going smoothly, Black business people aside, a bomb goes off. The bomb wasn't close to the athletes or anything, but it was at a public park and one spectator was killed. That put a damper on the entire Games. What was already the largest peace time security effort in the United States was stepped up, causing all kinds of inconveniences for fans, media and athletes alike. Maybe the bomb was placed by an angry, displaced Black business person... nah. It was probably just some nut. They never did catch him though.

A bomb couldn't stop Michael Johnson from winning gold medals in both the 200 and 400 meter dashes and keeping his "world's fastest man" title in check. He had us feeling so good about the track and field events that I won't mention Carl Lewis' tantrum when he wasn't included on the relay team.

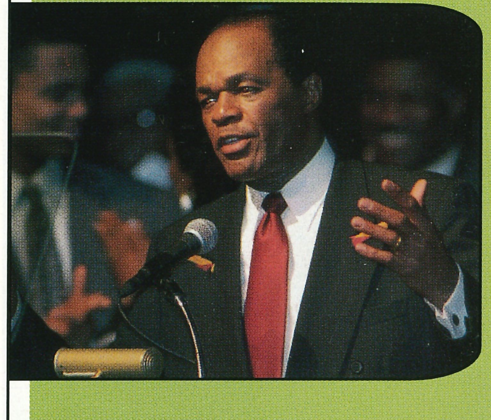
That didn't have me thinking about the people that were shut out, but I'm sure *they* didn't forget. This past Olympics just goes to show that even with all of the Black athletes representing in their field of play, the business owners, the real backbone of any community, were prevented from doing their thing. So, while everything appeared to be running smoothly, there was a contingent of local people that were being run out. The Olympics has a long way to go.

CHRIS WILDER

1996 AT A GLANCE

Apr 24 The video for Bone Thugs-N-Harmony's "Crossroads" debuts. The clip, directed by Michael Martin, will become one of the most moving pieces of the year and will propel "Crossroads" to multi-platinum status.

Apr 28 Prompted by health concerns, DC Mayor Marion Barry publicly announces a mini-retreat from the job. His advisors later dub the rest period an "advance."



May 10 Under the leadership of the Rev. Benjamin Chavis, the National African American Leadership Summit hosts its 1st National Hip-Hop Summit.

May 15 Bob Dole resigns from the Senate to concentrate on his presidential campaign.

May 16 Too Short celebrates the release of his 10th album, *Album Number Ten.* Short claims this will be his final project so he can have time to work on his production company, Dangerous Music.

May 30 After 75 years, the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma finally recognizes the race riot of 1921 as a part of its history. The riot, which left over 40 people dead, marked the first time the United States government dropped bombs on its own citizenry.

Jun 7 In his 100th pro fight, Julio Cesar Chavez is stopped by Oscar De La Hoya in the fourth round, forfeiting his title and bringing his record to a still unbelievable 97-2-1.

Jun 8 President Clinton publicly denounces the Black Church burnings.

Jun 13 Farrakhan registers to vote, kicking off a national voter registration effort to create a third political force.

Jun 14 Malavai Washington becomes only the second African-American male to reach the tennis finals at Wimbledon.

Jun 15 The Chicago Bulls, led by Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman, make history as the first team to win three straight NBA championships. Rodman's cross-dressing shifts into high gear.

1996 AT A GLANCE

Jun 18 De La Soul intensifies the attack against the Big Willie, pseudo-Mafioso gangsterism in hip-hop with their album *Stakes Is High*, creating what will soon become a trend in and of itself.

Jun 16 In memory of the children slain by the former South African regime, President Nelson Mandela honors them on the 20th anniversary of the Soweto uprising.

Jun 22 Dole snubs the NAACP. He declines invitation to speak before the 87th annual NAACP convention, saying Mfume tried to set him up for negative media publicity.

Jun 24 *America Is Dying Slowly* is released on Elektra Records. The all-star compilation marks one of the most concerted efforts towards AIDS awareness made by hip-hoppers.

Jun 26 Georgetown's Allen Iverson leads NBA draft picks.

Jun 30 Ramona Africa and the MOVE organization win case against city of Philadelphia. City must pay $1.5 million.

Jul 4 The Fugees' album, *The Score*, reaches the 5 million mark in sales.

Jul 17 Paris-bound TWA Jumbo Jet explodes shortly after takeoff from New York's Kennedy airport, killing all 230 passengers and crew on board. Speculation of possible sabotage shakes the nation.

AP WIDEWORLD

THE YEAR, THE TERROR

WELFARE AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION GET JACKED

At first glance, the flurry of Washington law-making and power moves seemed like business as usual. But, politically speaking, the year 1996 could be summed up in one word: terrorism. While the media speculated about foreign terrorism following the explosion of TWA Flight 800 and the bomb blast at the Olympics, some of the local yokels on Capital Hill instituted a little domestic terrorism of their own.

Newt Gingrich and the disciples of Reagan-esque conservatism—with the help of Bill Clinton and Congressional Democrats—changed welfare as we know it. They ended 61 years of the government helping 'those who needed it.' "It was for their own good," said both the President and Newt. They were promoting basic values. Sure it takes a village to raise a child. Just don't ask for any financial assistance! This group of village idiots decided that putting a million plus kids on the street would only make them stronger—if it didn't kill them first.

But the all too public, domestic terror program didn't stop with Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Clinton signed into law a legislation that could block between 300,000 to 900,000 disabled children from receiving Social Security Supplemental Income. Somehow, Congress thought that there were too many kids faking life-long disabilities. And if terrorizing citizens born in this country was not enough, Congress also dropkicked legal immigrants, denying them Supplemental Security Income and other benefits. While they were on a roll, Congress also cut off all aid to children of undocumented workers. If parents can't get the message, surely their children will.

1996 will also be remembered as the year that the Republicans attempted to court Black voters. Who could forget (although you may want to) Colin Powell and Oklahoma Congressman J. C. Watts speaking at the convention, while the cameras frantically panned the audience for Black faces? Keeping it real, Texas Senator Phil Gramm, in a desperate attempt to gain ground on Dole, reached into the Willie Horton bag of political tricks and released an ad linking criminality to welfare. Ending welfare would end crime—so went the logic. The market for his ad depicting fuzzy images of Black folks: New Hampshire, one of the whitest states in the Union.

The single most heinous moment of 1996 may have come out of the anti-affirmative action movement. The culprit this time was not David Duke, but Martin Luther King, Jr. himself. In the waning days of the campaign, the pro-Proposition 209 organization aired a commercial excerpting Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream Speech," suggesting that King and California Governor Pete Wilson were heading in the same direction. With such creative twists of Black-on-Black violence reaching an all new high (or low), the bridge to the future just may make the world a safer place after all. And, in the years ahead, politicians' art of flipping the script may find most law-abiders asking "whose safety is this?"

FRED MCKISSACK

DEF JAM
1997
january
Redman
february
LL Cool J
march
Foxy Brown
april
Flesh-n-Bone
may
Cormega
june
Richie Rich
july
The Cru
august
Da 5 Footaz
september
Method Man
october
Warren G
november
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LET ME RIDE

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF DR. DRE

Dr. Dre escaped just in time. What with the F.B.I. on their ass and Tupac Shakur murdered in cold blood on the streets of Vegas, Dre's former label, Death Row Records, heads into the most crucial test in its four-year history. And although Suge Knight is known to keep playa haters and set trippers off his ass in the streets of Los Angeles, can he stop the feds and the police from locking down the Row in 1997? Only time will tell.

Meanwhile, Dre, the infamous forward-thinker, is looking toward the future with his eyes wide open. "I'm grown up now... mentally," Dre reflected earlier this year after dumping Death Row. "I still like having fun, it's just on another level now."

1996 was indeed a year of spreading wings and flying away for the 31-year-old former Compton DJ. He left Death Row in March and married his girlfriend Nicole in May. Soon after, he opened the doors to his own label, Aftermath Entertainment. He then moved from his modest Calabasas home to a plush hillside crib closer to the city of angels. And in 1996, he tossed aside the cheesy chronic leaf hat and black T-shirts for crisp, tailored Armani suits.

After little more than a year of aesthetic change, Dre says his rebirth is really about shifting the direction of his life and taking advantage of the potential "moguldom" his producing skills have brought him. Gone is the flossing, fighting and flipping of talk show hosts up against a wall. "I am in total positive mode now," gushed Dre. "That's it."

An expert at working the media to his own advantage—proven with both N.W.A and Death Row—Dre positioned himself and his new album with an exclusive appearance on the cover of The Source, followed by stories in nearly every urban music magazine in print.

His bicoastal beef squasher, "East Coast Killer/West Coast Killer," got the buzz started early. The second single, the stringy, back-down-memory-lane "Been There Done That," finds Dre fatherly chastising all the gun toting MCs, making it known that the fatalistic gangsta sound and one of its kings... are dead.

Dre knows change is good for hip-hop. Industry experts expect the compilation album, *Dr. Dre Presents...The Aftermath*, to top the charts. For a man who went from producing songs like the upbeat dance tune "The Cabbage Patch" with the World Class Wrecking Cru to becoming rap's most respected producer, '96 ain't been a bad year.

In 1997 look for Dre to continue in full swing. Like any real creative person, Dre gets bored fast. So now he says his goal is to get those platinum hands, responsible for upwards of $200 million in record sales, into developing TV sitcoms and producing movies. The door is finally open for all the major film companies and music folk who were dying to work with Dre but were fearful of his affiliation with Death Row Records. The producer with nine lives just keeps coming.

FRANK WILLIAMS

DR. DRE/THOMAS LAU-OUTLINE, CLINTON & UMC TRAUMA CENTER/AP WIDEWORLD

1996 AT A GLANCE

Jul 18 Shaquille O'Neal signs a 7-year, $120-million contract with the Lakers.

Jul 27 Bomb explodes in Centennial Park at the 1996 Olympics. Fear of terrorism, domestic and otherwise, runs rampant.

Aug 2 Rap-A-Lot Records recording artist Seagram Miller is murdered on the streets of his hometown, Oakland.

Aug 14 General Colin Powell addresses the GOP convention. The retired general speaks in support of Affirmative Action and women's reproductive rights.

Aug 18 *The San Jose Mercury News* begins a three-part series detailing how a San Francisco Bay area drug ring sold tons of cocaine to the street gangs of South-Central Los Angeles, and funneled millions of dollars in drug profits to a CIA-run guerrilla army. The series, written by journalist Gary Webb, traces the crack cocaine explosion to two Nicaraguan cocaine dealers, and sparks national debate.

Aug 21 Clinton signs minimum wage increase into law.

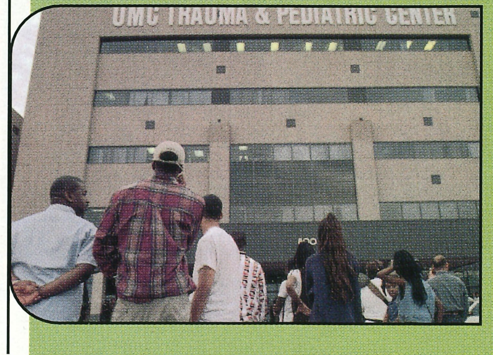
Aug 22 Clinton signs welfare reform legislation, which ends the 60-year-old policy of guaranteed federal aid for the poor. This decision is a major power move in his re-election campaign.

A New Beginning

Aug 26 The Houston Rockets seemingly trade away their youth (Sam Cassell, Robert Horry, Mark Bryant and Chucky Brown) to the Phoenix Suns for Charles Barkley and one last shot at a ring before he retires.

Sep 7 Tupac Shakur is shot four times after the Tyson vs. Seldon fight in Las Vegas.

Sep 13 Tupac dies of wounds sustained in shooting.



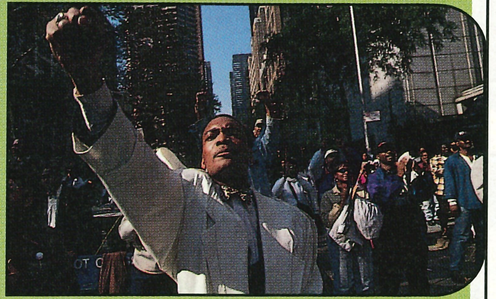
1996 AT A GLANCE

Sep 27 National African-American Leadership Conference hosts National Black Political Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. Approximately 5,000 people attend the keynote address delivered by Minister Louis Farrakhan. Delegates from around the country draft a 51-page document which spells out a Black agenda.

Oct 5 Tiger Woods wins his first PGA Tour title in only his fifth tournament as a pro. The 20-year-old golf sensation won three US Amateurs, and also made golf acceptable amongst young kids and Blacks.

Oct 14 After much speculation on the impact the Million Man March had on the 1996 presidential elections, Minister Louis Farrakhan announces that he cannot, in good conscience, support either candidate.

Oct 16 Minister Louis Farrakhan, the Reverend Benjamin Chavis, Winnie Mandela, and the Reverend Al Sharpton lead thousands of participants in a rally commemorating the 1995 Million Man March. The event, billed as a World Day of Atonement, is held outside the United Nations in New York City, and draws 40,000 participants. Farrakhan delivers the keynote address.

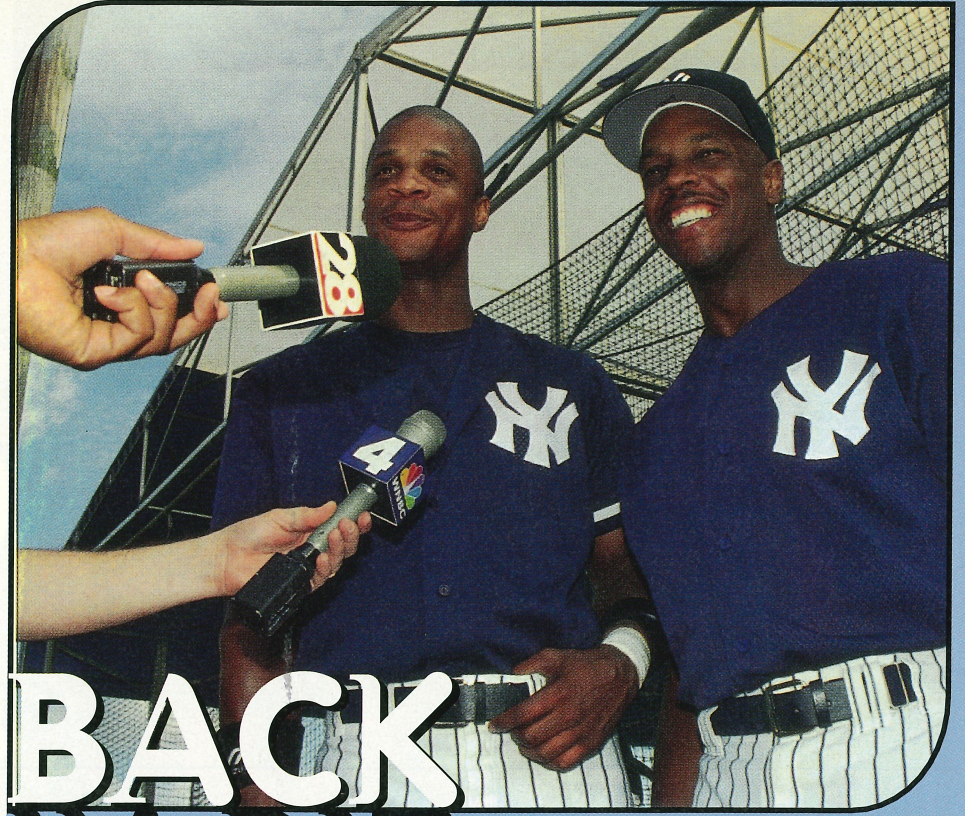


Oct 16 Spike Lee's *Get on The Bus* debuts in theaters throughout America. The film attempts to recapture some of the dynamics involved in the historic Million Man March of October 16, 1995.

Nov 5 Election Day

Nov 9 Mike Tyson is TKOd by Evander Holyfield in the 11th round of their championship bout. The defeat ends Tyson's post-prison romp through the ranks of dubious but exceedingly shaken opponents, and raises many questions about his future.

TIMELINE COMPILED BY RASHID SHABAZZ, LARVESTER GAITHER AND CHRIS WILDER



BACK IN BIZ

GOODEN & STRAWBERRY MAKE ATHLETIC COMEBACKS

When the New York Yankees finally won the American League Championship over the Baltimore Orioles in October, the team celebrated with cheers, hugs and champagne. For two Yankees team members, however, the champagne was merely worn, not consumed.

Darryl Strawberry and Dwight "Doc" Gooden, two players seeking redemption and who both contributed in important ways to the Yanks' resurgent performance, reflected quietly in a room off to the side of the clubhouse after the main celebration. Both made it a point not to drink. They couldn't afford to. Neither man wanted to jeopardize a year that can only be described as miraculous, the stuff movies are made of.

With the Yankees' World Series victory this year, Doc and Darryl should forever be known as the ultimate Comeback Kids, even though they're well past 30. When Strawberry and Gooden first came on the New York scene in the early '80s with the Mets, both were labeled as can't-miss players, certain Hall of Famers. Strawberry was an outfielder from South Central LA, six-foot-six and wiry. Gooden was the former Little League phenom from Tampa who pitched at nearly 100 miles an hour. Both men tantalized the Big Apple for a while, leading the Mets to a World Series Championship in 1986. Gooden won a Cy Young Award, and Strawberry consistently hit monstrous home runs.

But slowly, their seemingly limitless futures and wondrous skills suffered because of substance abuse. Gooden fell first, missing the last two months of the 1987 season after testing positive for cocaine. He seemed to rebound for a while after rehab, but fell off again after being suspended in 1994 for two months and then a year. The Mets, also noticing that Gooden had lost much of his velocity and control, kicked the former All-Star to the curb.

Strawberry found himself traded to the Dodgers and hounded by family tragedies and poor choices he had made in his life. He spent three lackluster years in his hometown and in San Francisco, ending up seemingly plagued by domestic violence, alcohol and drug problems, and out of baseball again with another suspension on his head.

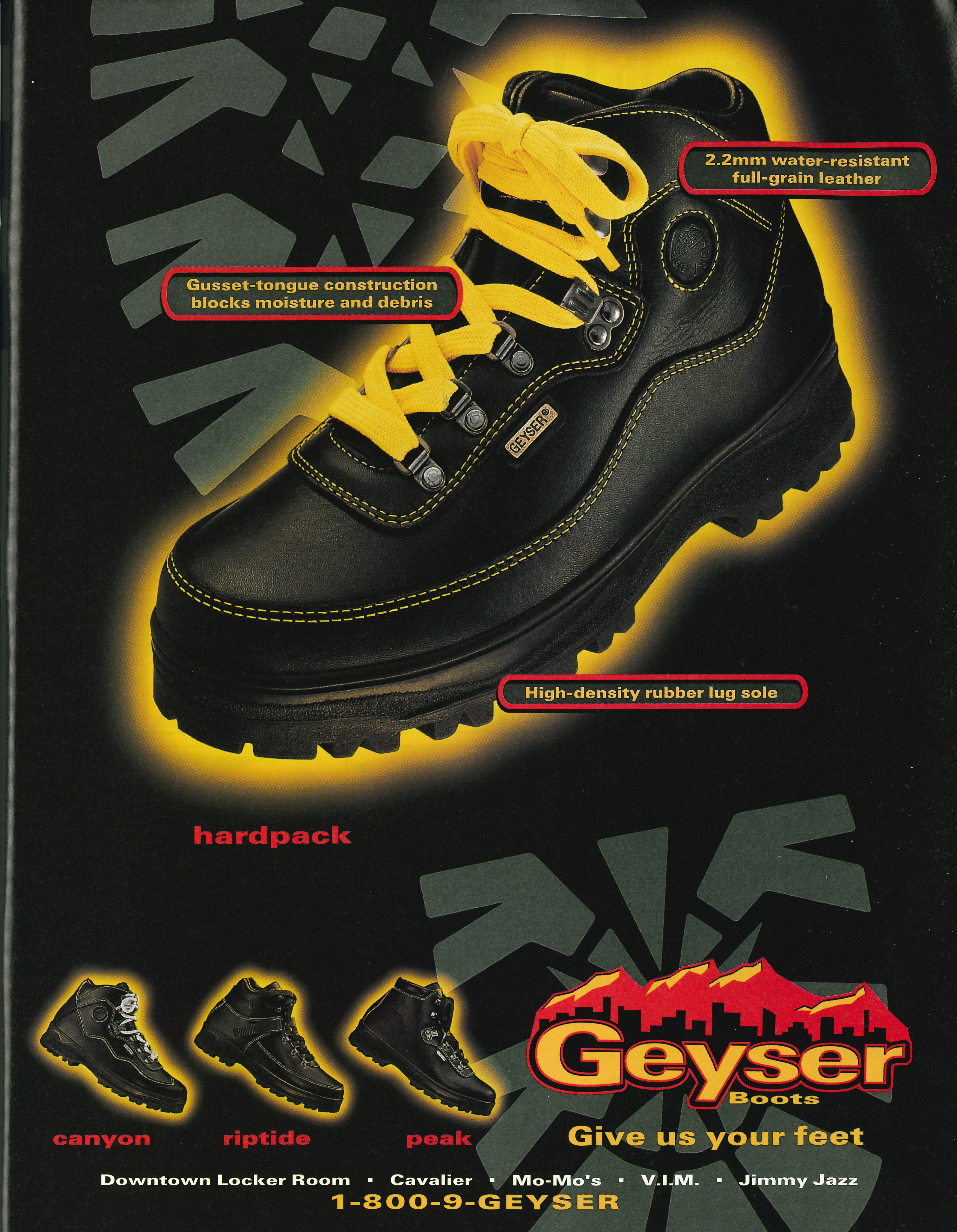
But 1996 turned out to be the year for Doc and Darryl. The two men, never running buddies but always close during their Mets years, were united this year, thanks to meddlesome Yanks owner George Steinbrenner.

Gooden came back first. Steinbrenner signed him at the end of the 1995 season. Even though Gooden had a few shaky outings during the first month of the season, it didn't take him long to repay Steinbrenner's confidence. On May 14, Gooden blanked the Seattle Mariners, 2-0, for the first no-hitter of his career.

After spending most of this season with the independent minor-league St. Paul Saints, Steinbrenner signed Strawberry against the wishes of many of the team's players. Darryl contributed right away, hitting three home runs in a game his first week on the team and providing power from the left side that the team sorely lacked.

Nobody knows what will happen with the duo next year, but whatever becomes of Doc and Darryl, you'll never be able to take '96 away from the Ultimate Comeback Kids. **KEVIN CARTER**

GOODEN & STRAWBERRY, TYSON & HOLYFIELD/AP WIDEWORLD, RALLY SCENE/ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN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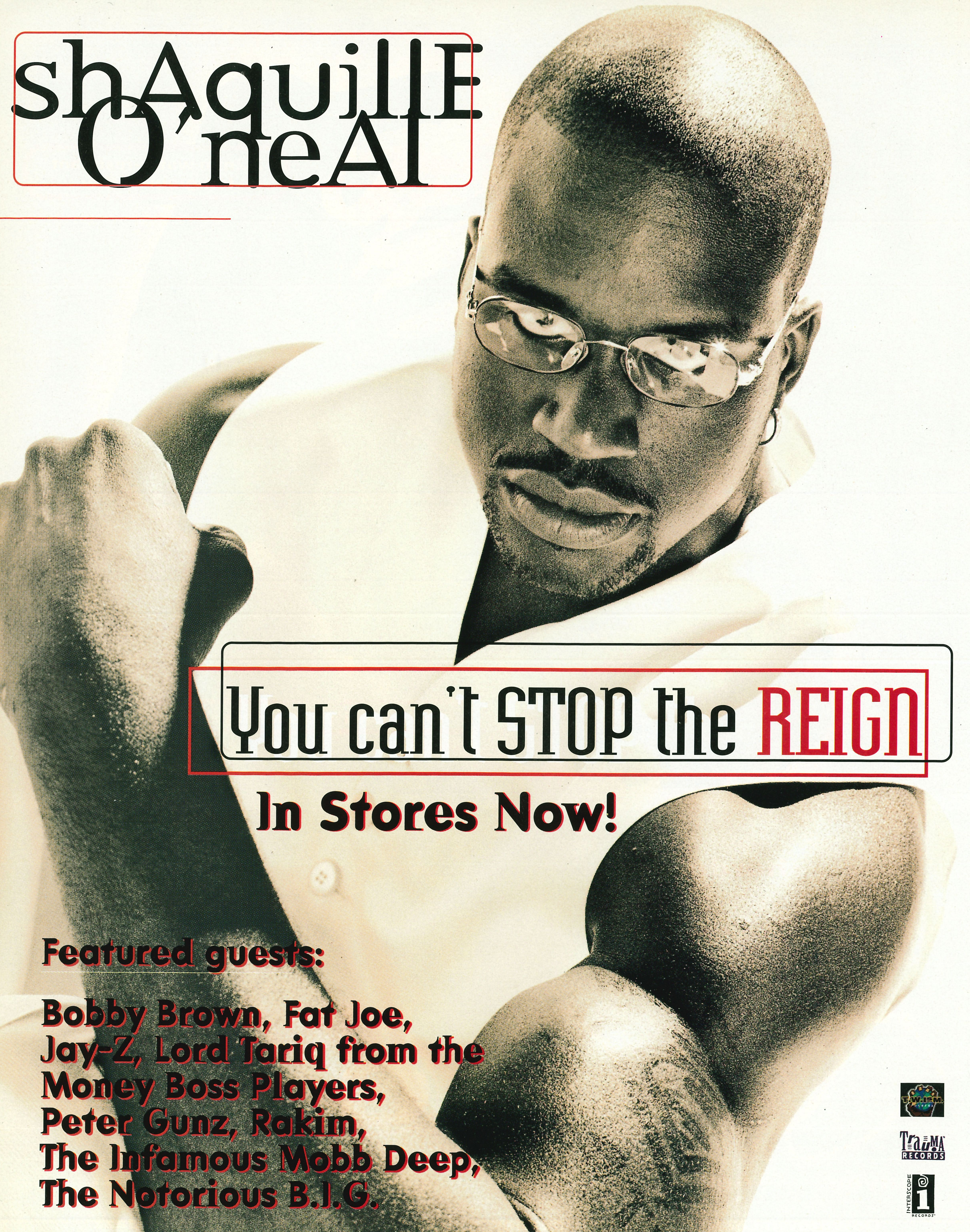
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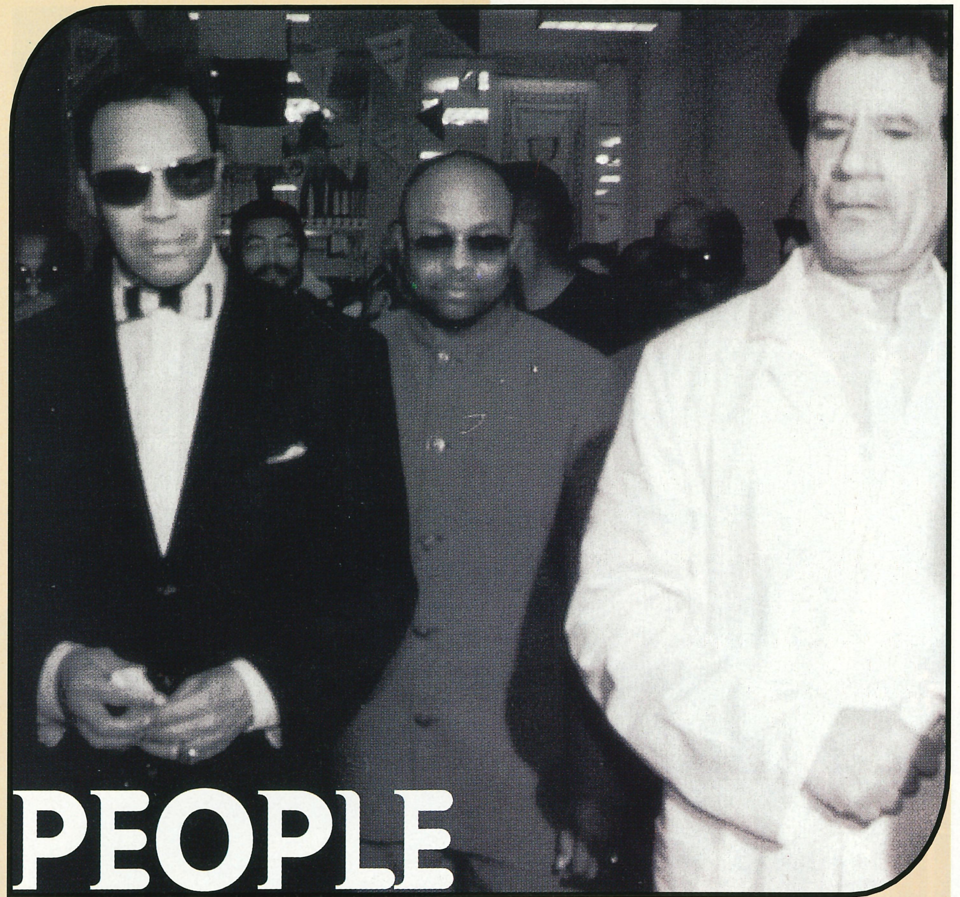


AP WIDEWORLD

PEOPLE GET READY

NATION TIME IN '96

In the year since a million Black men gathered to create a human sea on Washington's Mall, Minister Louis Farrakhan and The Nation of Islam have kept their promise to step up their efforts on the political scene. For The Nation, a religious group which historically has stayed away from America's mainstream politics, this new role breaks a long-standing tradition. Here's a closer look at how the Nation stepped up its political statements, particularly towards the latter part of 1996.

November 1995
The World: Farrakhan tours Africa, the Caribbean and the Muslim worlds. Rumors of a pledge to Farrakhan of one billion dollars from Libyan leader Colonel Mummar al-Qaddafi begin to surface. Since the US does not consider Libya a friendly nation, the State Department denies Farrakhan the gift. Farrakhan argues that the US not only allow the gift, but match it and apply it towards the benefit of the Black community. Farrakhan continues cavorting openly with public enemies of the US government.

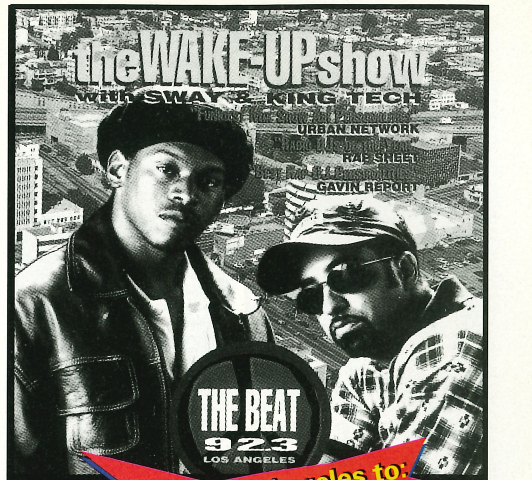
September 22, 1996
New York: New York Mosque #7 in Harlem convenes a memorial after the death of Tupac Shakur. Hundreds of supporters and many East Coast rappers turn out to pay their respects. The Nation has consistently had the ear of the Hip-Hop Nation.

September 27-29, 1996
St. Louis: Farrakhan is the keynote speaker at the National African-American Leadership Summit (an organization headed by Ben Chavis), where delegates discuss education, international development, prisons, housing, family issues and environmental justice, among other topics. Delegates ratify a "National Agenda" and create a "third political force" that rates elected officials in their willingness to support this agenda. Voter registration is emphasized.

October 15, 1996
Chicago: On behalf of crack addicts, their families, and anyone else victimized by the drug, the Nation of Islam announces plans to file a class action suit against the government if lawyers can substantiate the *San Jose Mercury News'* exposé of C.I.A. operatives strategically moving crack into America's inner cities.

October 16, 1996
New York: Marking the one-year anniversary of the Million Man March, an estimated 40,000 supporters, including South Africa's Winnie Mandela, come to the United Nations for a World Day of Atonement rally. In his address to the crowd, Farrakhan focuses on the ties between Blacks in the US as well as oppressed people all over the world.

A. BRONNER



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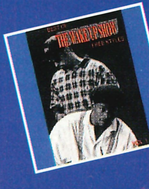

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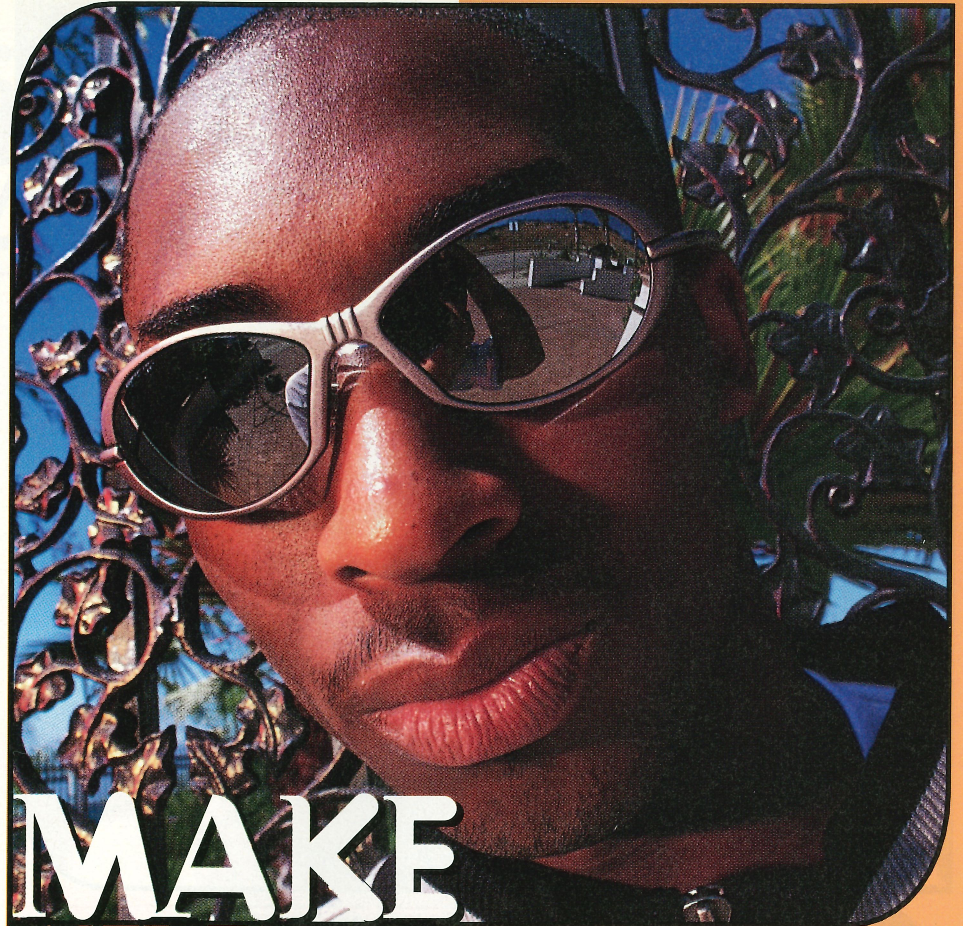


MAKE THAT JUMP

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES MOVE TO THE BIG TIME

When **Kevin Garnett** was picked in the 1995 NBA draft, one thing was made very clear: pro teams are not afraid to go with a player straight outta high school. See, Garnett was the first player to join the NBA right from high school since Darryl "Chocolate Thunder" Dawkins and Bill Willoughby broke in around 1975. And everybody had something to say. You couldn't pick up a newspaper without reading about the education Kevin's going to miss, or his maturity or lack thereof, or whether or not there's any room for a nineteen-year-old in the game's greatest league. The colleges came out against the move because they aren't trying to have it become a trend, causing them to lose out on all the great talent that they refuse to pay anyway.

Kevin Garnett ended up having a pretty good year by any standards. He averaged over 10 points and 6 boards a night, represented in the rookie all-star game, and was a starter by year's end. As 1996 began and Garnett's rookie season came to an end, his successful year propped open the door for other high schoolers that thought they had the skills. Usually, if a kid doesn't meet the requirements to play Division I ball, he'll try a juco or just sit out a year. But now K.G. showed everybody that if you can ball, just go to the league. You can get Nike commercials and everything.

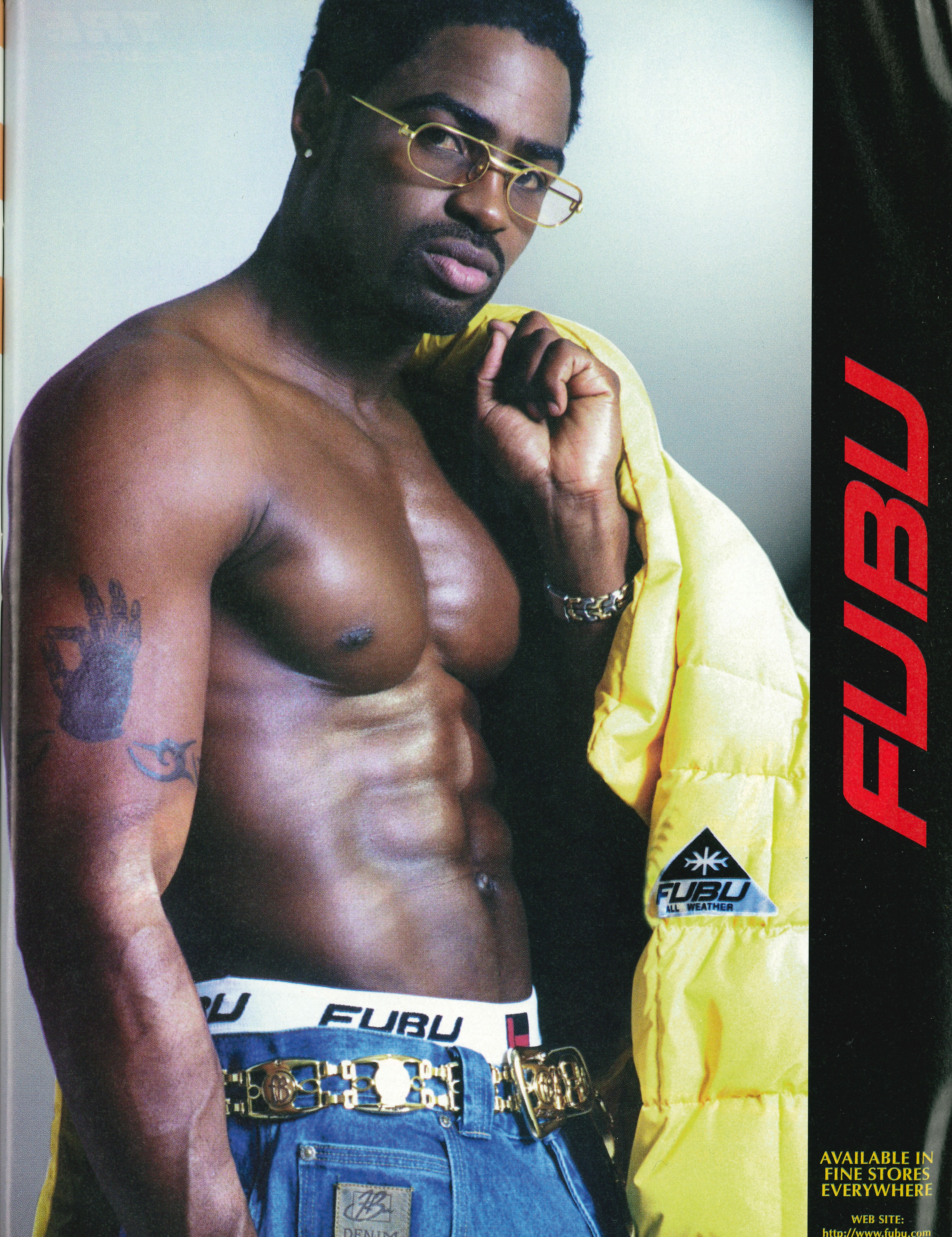
Along comes a kid named Kobe Bryant. His family has dough and he definitely lived the upper middle-class life. He's quick, articulate, took the singer Brandy to his prom, and speaks two languages. His SAT score was just short of perfect and he is the first non-hardship case to jump from high school to the league.

What would make a guy like that opt for the league over college? Simple. After Kobe was drafted by Charlotte this year, they made a deal that would send him to the Lakers and he didn't miss a beat. As soon as he got to LA he was a star; he's been on Brandy's show, *Moesha*, and he's been on HBO's *Arli$$*. Suddenly he became part of the "who's who in LA," before he had even dribbled a ball in pro competition.

Next in line for early fame is Jermaine O'Neal, a monster from South Carolina who eats up rebounds like it's all good. He's an intimidating shot-blocker at the high school level, and will one day be a great NBA player. He didn't qualify academically to play college ball, so following Kevin Garnett's lead, he declared himself eligible. He was picked 17th overall.

If a good enough high school talent is available, teams have to take him. They can't risk another team getting him and having him pan out. Just look at baseball and hockey. In those sports, drafting out of high school is the norm. As a matter of fact, just about every professional sport from tennis to gymnastics to swimming starts during or after high school. Basketball has subscribed to a different set of standards, but that may change now. One in '95, two in '96. Expect to see more and more each year making that jump. **CHRIS WILDER**

WILLIAM HAMES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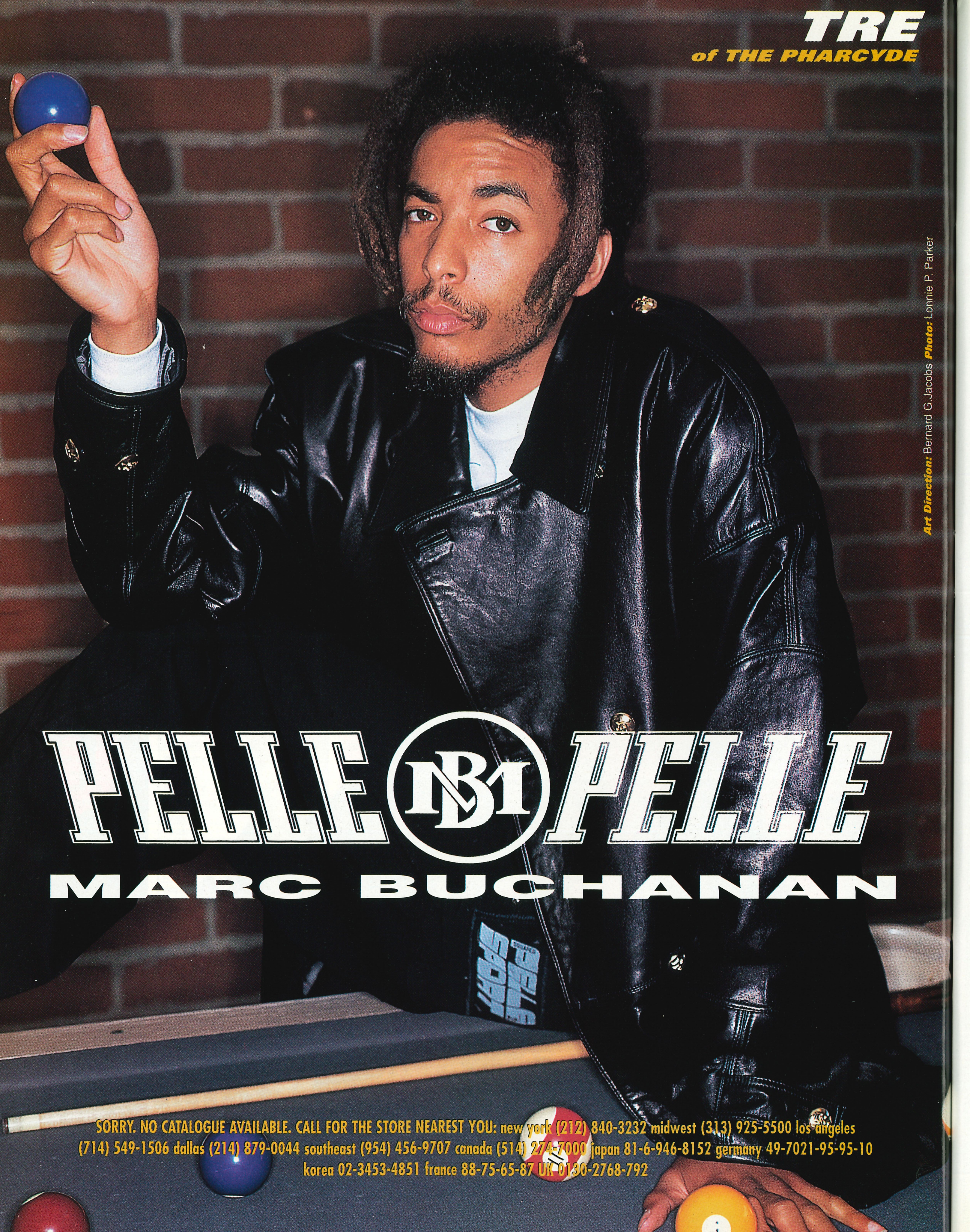
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OPERATION CRACK DOWN

DID THE CIA PUT LA KIDS ON THE PIPE?

Since the crack pipe began ripping through the 'hood, the word on the street has been that the government deliberately pushed crack cocaine into the Black community. Last August, when the *San Jose Mercury News* published "Dark Alliance" (a three-part series chronicling the C.I.A.'s connection to two Nicaraguan, pro-Contra cocaine dealers that began in the early 1980s), many self proclaimed conspiracy theorists, alongside, community leaders, began saying, "I told you so."

"There is abounding circumstantial evidence," says the Reverend Jesse Jackson, who is deeply concerned about the implications of the C.I.A.'s arrangements with the anti-Communist Nicaraguan commando group Frente Democratica Nicaraguense (FDN). The FDN allegedly sold thousands of kilos of cocaine to LA-based Crips and Bloods to purchase arms for their guerrilla war against the Sandinistas, Nicaragua's democratically-elected government. "There is the weight of a lot of experiences," adds Jackson, "with our government operating in adverse or conspiratorial ways against Black people."

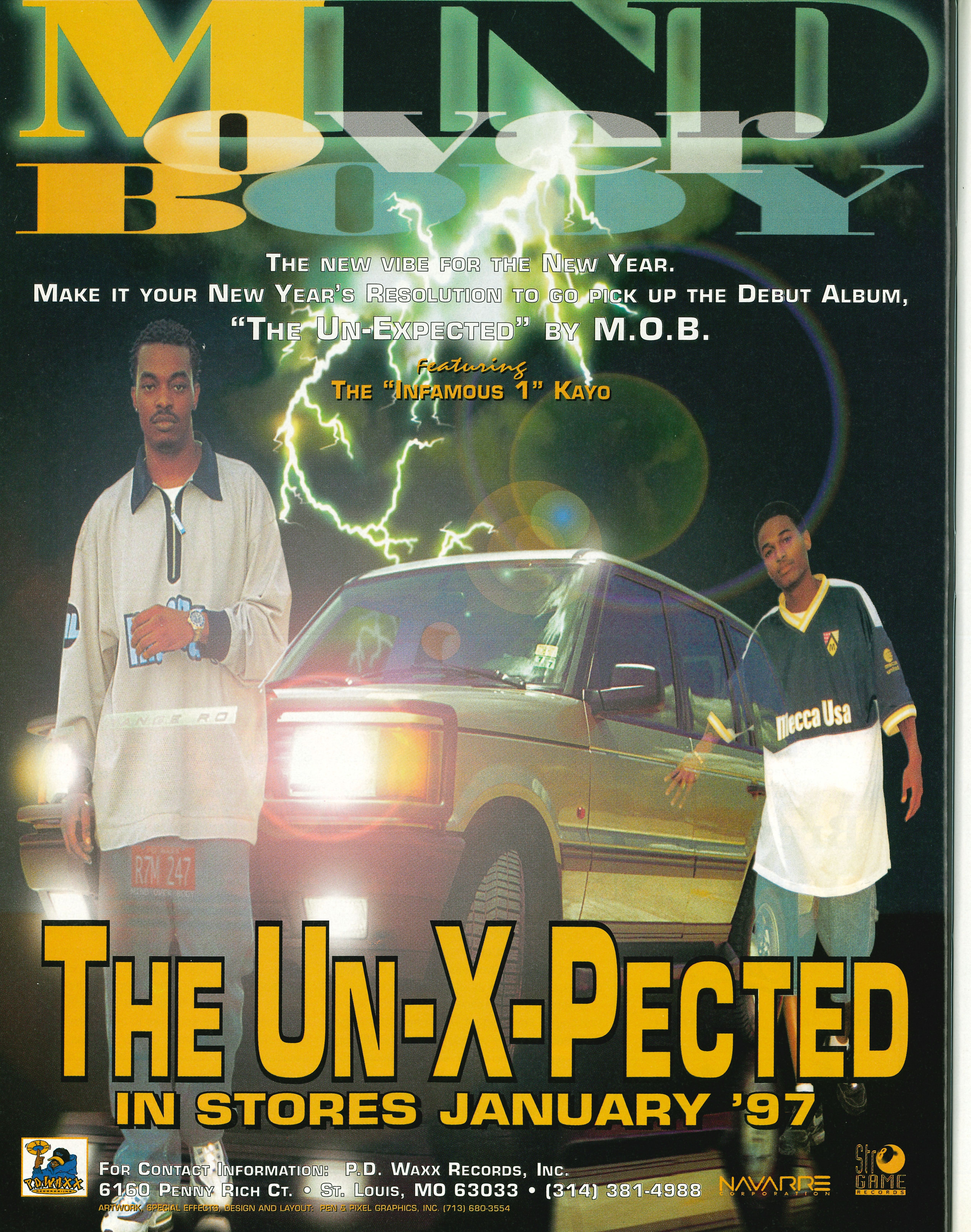
Several major newspapers (the *New York Times, Washington Post*, and *LA Times*) have challenged the credibility of the series, claiming the *Mercury News* reporter uncritically accepted information from unreliable informants. "This was not some grand design of the drug cartels or someone at CIA headquarters in Langley, VA, who was sitting around thinking up ways to raise money for the Contras," said Ronald Seigel, a professor at the University of California at Los Angeles who has conducted extensive research on crack cocaine. Although few dispute that the FDN was formed under the auspices of the CIA, the two key drug dealers in question, Danielo Blandon and Norwin Meneses, have been portrayed as Contra sympathizers—not high level organizers. Nonetheless, the Justice Department, House Intelligence Committee and the CIA have each begun to investigate the allegations.

Let's not forget some other disturbing historical facts:

- The Tuskeegee experiments, where government researchers intentionally infected uninformed Black men with the deadly syphilis virus or allowed it to go untreated.
- The disproportionate numbers of Black males drafted for service during the Vietnam War (25% of draftees but 8% of population).
- The large number of death sentences given to Blacks as compared to lesser sentences given to whites convicted of committing the same crimes, and unbalanced sentencing in general.
- The F.B.I.'s COINTELPRO program, which discredited Black activists and organizations, both mainstream and radical.

Like a wild fire, crack quickly spread out of control during the mid-1980s and into the '90s, devastating entire communities and destroying countless lives through drug-related shootings in turf wars and stray bullets, not to mention the lurid social consequences that follow drug addiction. Maxine Waters, who called for the Justice Department investigation, believes that the idea that this 'fire' was deliberately set may not be as far-fetched as some would like to think. "The enormous damage and human tragedy that has been associated with crack, against the backdrop of very serious charges and years of covered up activities by this country's intelligence community, particularly against African-Americans, causes many people to wonder what exactly may have actually occurred in their communities," she said.

LEE COPELAND



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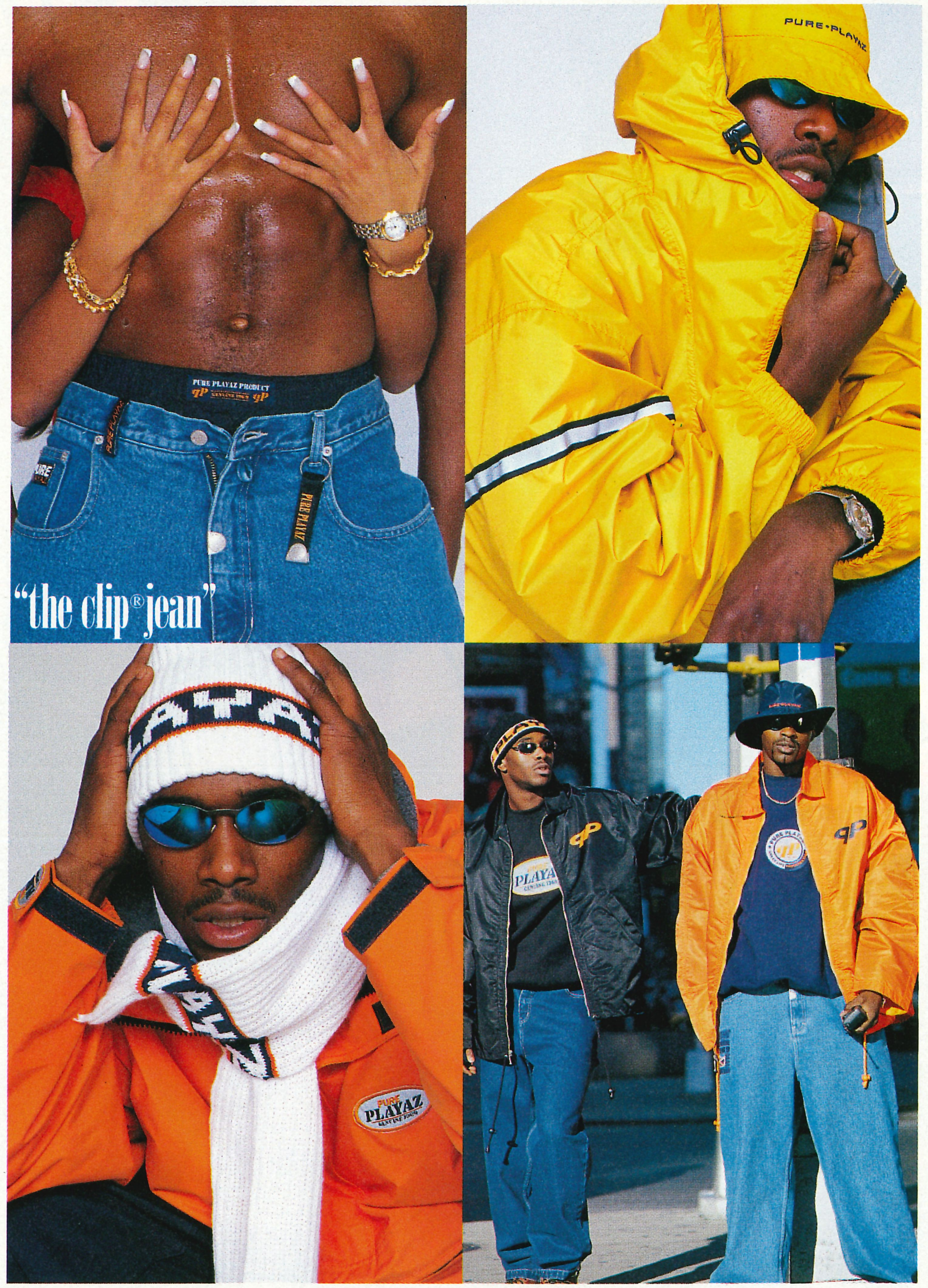

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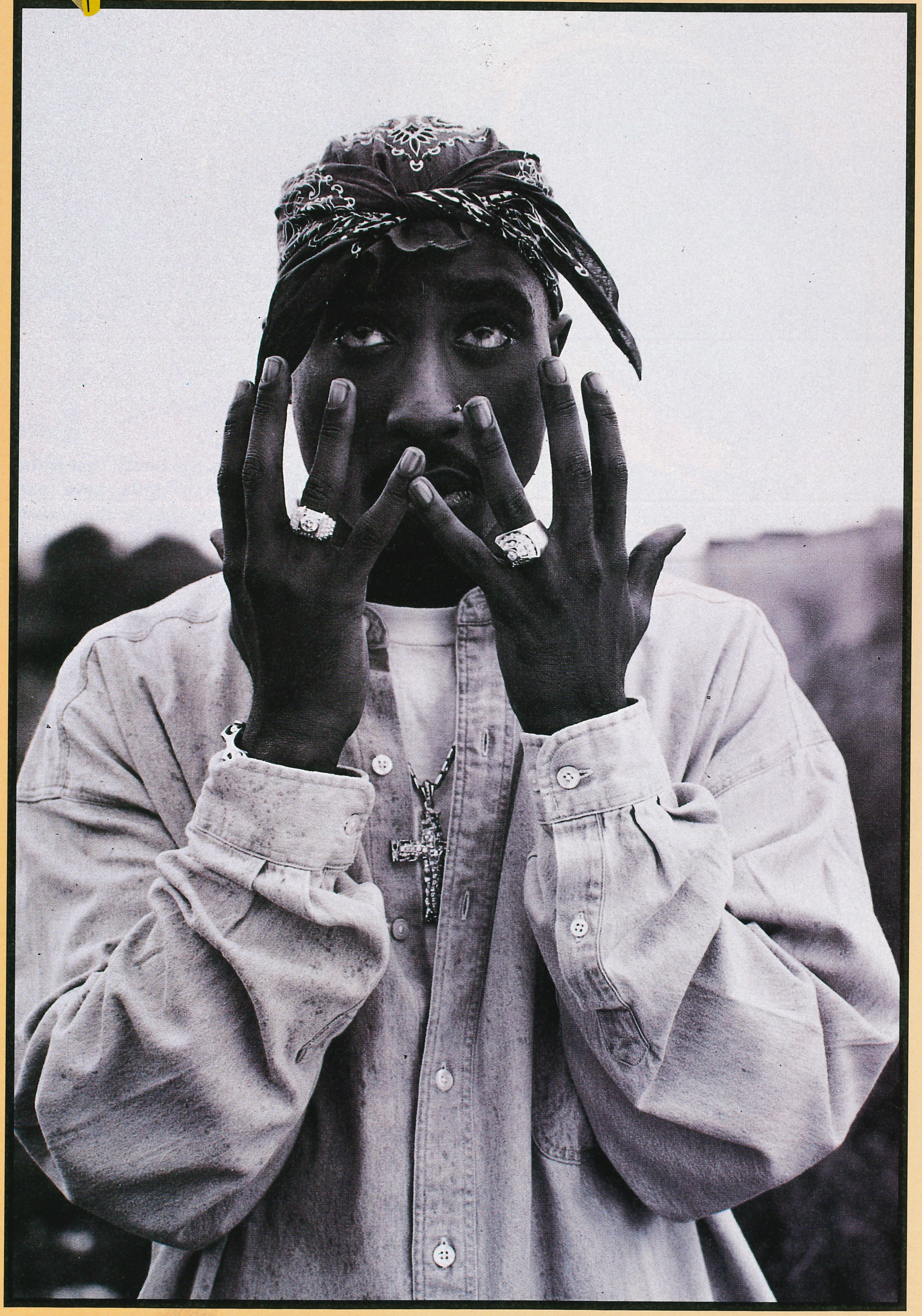
THE ALL SOURCE MIND SQUAD '96 PICKS

Who is the best? That is the question MCs have purported to know the answer to for decades. From battle rhymers to player MCs to hyper-real hardcore storytellers, the constant query has remained: Who is champion Mic Controller? Many have tried, few are successful, some get over with smoke and mirrors. Steeped in the same history and aesthetic parameters of dopeness as our musical brethren, every month The Source Mind Squad makes the call on whose lyrics are on fire and which MCs need to pursue sign-language skills instead of verbal gymnastics.

1996 proved to be a year fraught with mumbling, wanna-be players on the mic, juxtaposed next to the full-blown nightmares of so-called "gangster rap" perpetrators going way over the top. In between was yet another resurgence of quality lyricism from some of the least expected parts of America, and a brand new injection of vocal harmonies and live music instrumentation coming from some familiar and sometimes unlikely places. *The All-Source Mind Squad '96 Picks* is our listing of this year's artistic fighters who barreled through the dung of mediocrity and managed to make their mark on our collective eyes and ears. Submitted for your review: Only The Illest!

THE ALL SOURCE MIND SQUAD '96 PICKS

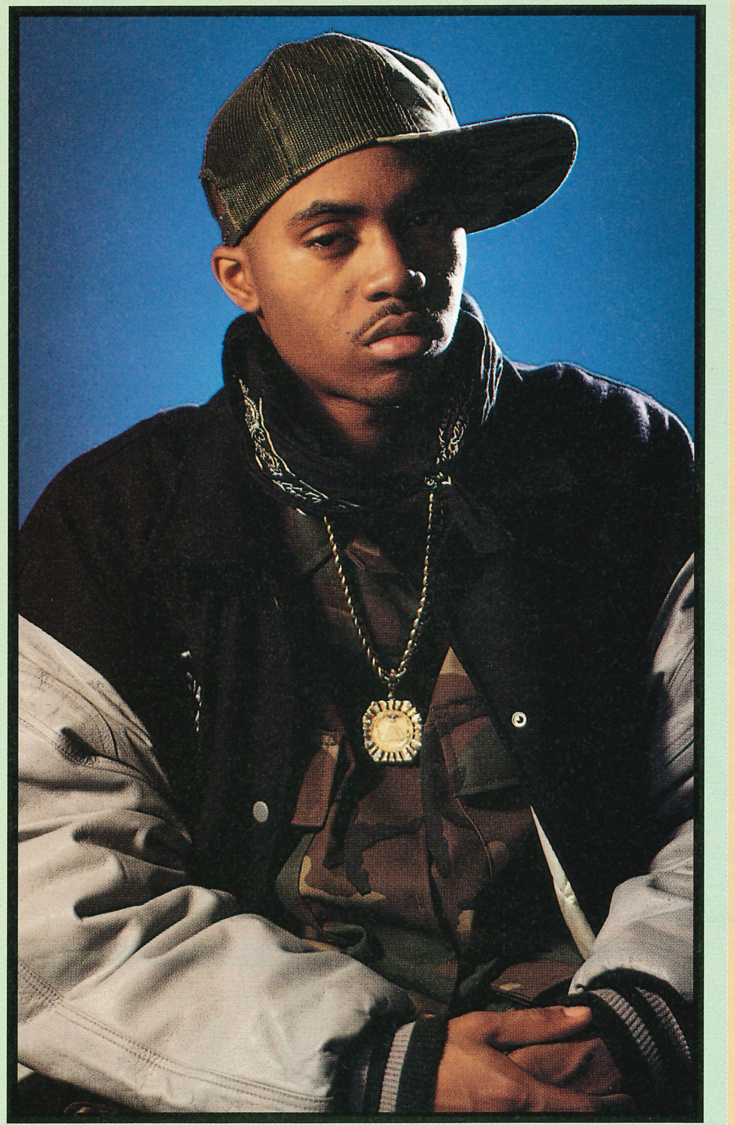
ARTISTS OF THE YEAR-SOLO



DAN LIXENBURG–OUTLINE

TUPAC

Without a shadow of a doubt, Tupac Shakur had the most impact in the '96. Much like the venerable Muhammad Ali, Pac's mouth antics aided his continued hold on superstar status. After being released from prison and signing with Death Row, Tupac went on a long-running media tirade, continuously blasting NY rapper Notorious BIG, Bad Boy Entertainment, and anyone who prompted his ire. His post-prison work, *All Eyez On Me,* took off like a rocket, selling in excess of 5 million copies (500,000 the first week). After seven months of high-visibility and controversy, Tupac was tragically killed in Las Vegas. Ironically, but not unexpectedly, his death propelled all four of his albums back to the *Billboard* charts. Indeed, with three more albums (*Makavelli, One Nation, Outlaw Immortals*) soon to be released, Pac's legacy and impact on both the economic community and hip-hop culture will stretch well into 1997.



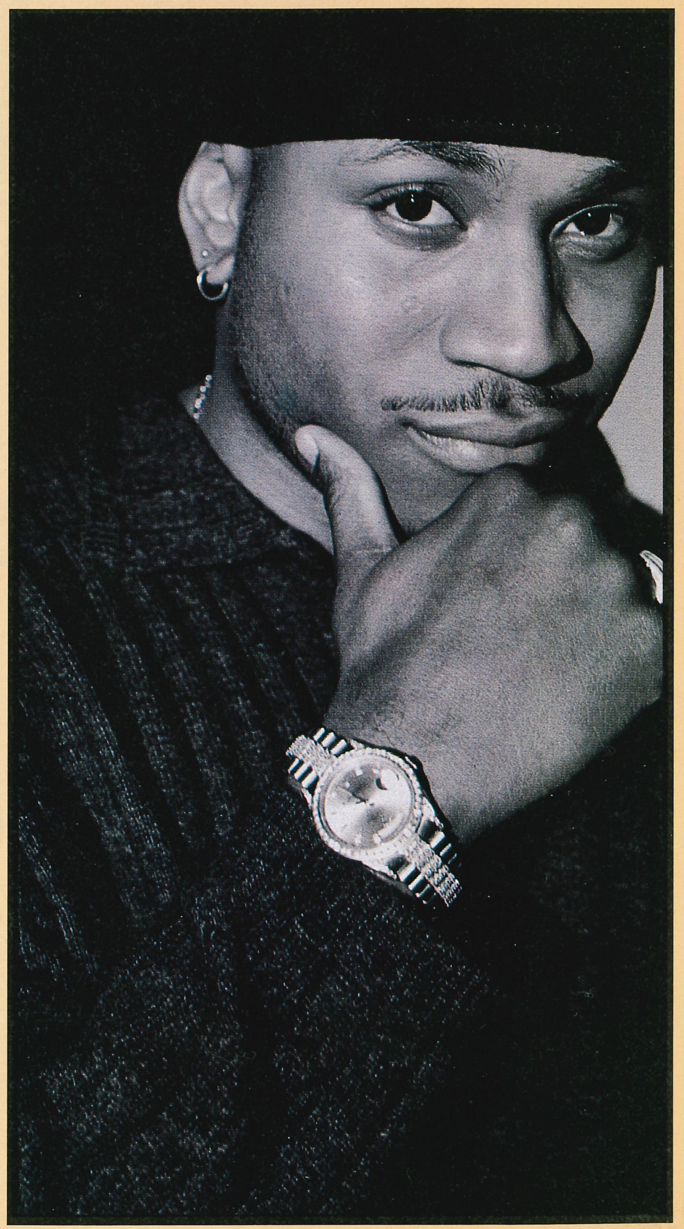
NAS

Nas' 1996 success can be credited to an industry makeover. For three years he was billed as the reincarnation of his idol Rakim, but the illmatic MC didn't quite have the power, presence or the charisma to command attention like the Ra. Only Nas' phenomenal lyrical ability saved 1994's Rakim-esque incarnation, *Illmatic.* Thus, the plan for his second release, *It Was Written*—make the personality fit the ability. His label, Columbia Records, put on a major marketing campaign that allowed consumers to get up close and personal with Nas. His boyishly handsome looks worked for the females, and his street credentials and the light Islamic influence woven into his lyrics were savvy enough to win over the most hardened brothers. With a radio-friendly single featuring the Fugees' Lauryn Hill, and major video play on MTV, BET and The BOX, Nas' incredible, soft-spoken lyrical ability spoke volumes in 1996... double platinum volumes!

NAS/ WILLIAM RICHARDS, LL COO J/JOHN P. SALISBURY–OUTLINE

LL COOL J

Hip-hop's first sex symbol proved, once again, why ladies love LL. There's no question as to who his target market is. By keeping in shape, flashing his ever-engaging smile, and writing songs that still resonate teenage love, LL was simply the man for much of '96. His album, *Mr. Smith,* was jam packed full of gold selling R&B melodies like "Hey Lover," "Doin' It," and the recently remixed "Loungin'." In addition to his successful recording career, LL's performance acting in the NBC sitcom *In The House* also served to further his legend as one of the most talented all-round entertainers in the industry.



THE ALL SOURCE MIND SQUAD '96 PICKS

ARTISTS OF THE YEAR-GROUP

FUGEES

The Fugees' year must have been crafted out of a dream. Peep it, a group of artists put out a sophomore work, *The Score,* after a creatively powerful, but commercially weak, debut. And after less than a year, the laundry list for that superior second work reads something like this: 11 million records sold worldwide, unabashed superstar status, and the object of mainstream media fascination/glorification like no rappers since... damn, we don't know. *Somebody pinch us.* In '96, the Fugees became a testament to the validity—economic, artistic and otherwise—of an intelligent alternative to the ignorant buck-buck mentality that was threatening to strangle hip-hop. But most importantly, they managed all that extra-large, blow up shit without losing sight of the community-minded values and grassroots aesthetic that made them special in the first place.

DE LA SOUL

Will De La Soul ever receive their full due as innovators of killing tired and senseless trends from the masses of hip-hop fans? Having already single-handedly destroyed the gold chain wearing era and slayed the dragon of lyrical simplicity, De La's crusade for '96 was to destroy hip-hop's fascination with the worst of Euro-centric culture. *Stakes Is High* helped initiate the war against the New York-centric, champagne-sipping, cigar-smoking, designer suit-wearing, Mafia wannabe MC who had eclipsed the drug dealing, gangbanging MC of the West Coast. Their singles, "Stakes Is High" and "Itzsoweze," held a mirror to the faces of rappers so steeped in Black self hate, they chose to emulate the very agents of oppression that have led to their cultural demise. In the final analysis, even if De La Soul never again duplicates the economic success of their debut, this trio from Long Island will forever be marked as one of, if not *the* most important group in the wacky world of hip-hop.

DE LA SOUL/ERIC JOHNSON, FUGEES/CHRIS BUCK–OUTLINE

BONE THUGS -N- HARMONY

In '96, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony proved to be much more than five socially apathetic kids who dreamed of getting a record deal, or some Eazy-E, post-N.W.A sideshow. Their album, 1995's *E. 1999 Eternal,* played well into the following year. Their remix of "Crossroads," coupled with an incredible video, kept the album near the top of the music charts and ushered new fans into records stores every week. "Crossroads'" hypnotic portrayal of the group's realization of their own mortality struck the hearts of many. Indeed, even without their mentor—the late Eazy E—guiding their future, the Thugs have grown up and taken responsibility for themselves, as evidenced by the formation of their label Mo' Thugs Records, which will surely serve as the platform for launching future generations of thugs.

OUTKAST/JOHN HALPERN, BONE THUGS 'N HARMONY/REISIG & TAYLOR–OUTLINE

OUTKAST

This ecclesiastic duo put God and morality into fine perspective on their second album, *ATLiens.* Not being preachy or self-righteous, Dre and Big Boi embodied the acceptance of life's responsibilities that many young Black men refuse to uphold. Their music was just as spiritually inclined as their lyrical verses. Poignant soulful rhythms and hip-hop aesthetics tugged at the mind, soul and ass of any listener within earshot. Also contributing to the group's appeal were Dre and Big Boi's deep southern dialects, an engaging element that accentuated their rapid lyrical cadence. These two ATLiens can't be compared to anybody in the business... or on this planet.

NEW ARTISTS OF THE YEAR-SOLO

JAY Z

Without question, '96 will be remembered as The Year of Big Willie, and no one personified that image better than Jay Z. After releasing his blow-up summatime anthem "Ain't No Nigga" with Ms. Nana Foxy Brown on his own Roc-A-Fella Records, he laced us with *Reasonable Doubt*, an equally explosive debut album. Such power moves not only earned him top-tier MC status, but also established his position as a true to life Lucci-gettin' businessman.

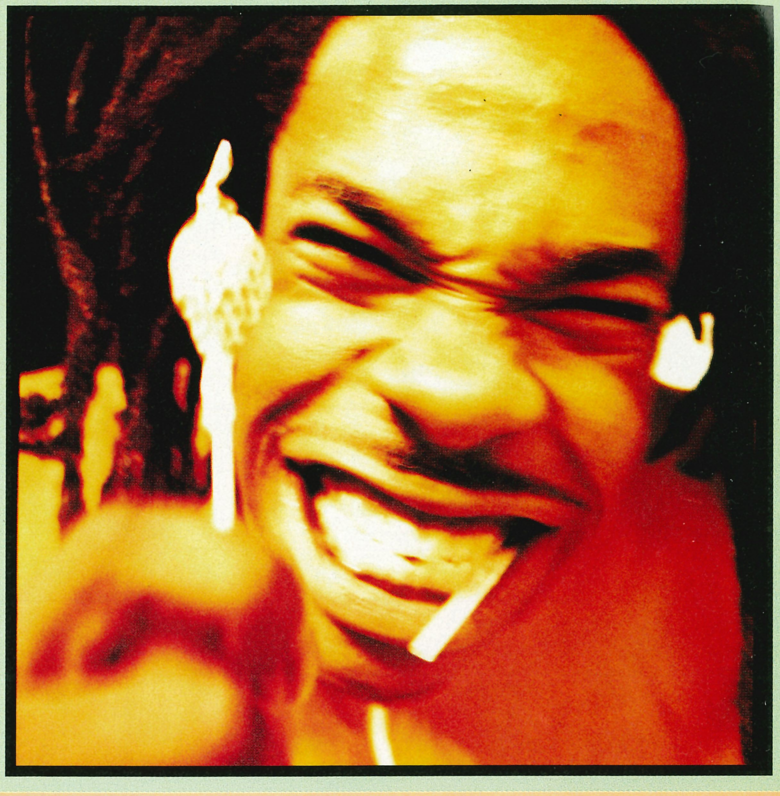
FOXY BROWN

Virtually unheard of before her show-stealing verse on LL's "I Shot Ya" remix, Foxy Brown stepped on the scene this year with intentions of grabbin' a spot in hip-hop's starting line-up. Despite heavy criticism from a few male and female veteran rappers, this chocolate cutie combined sexy-ass, ghetto princess looks with a cocaine queenpin's aesthetic. She guest-starred her way into our lives by sharing the bill with such notables as Jay Z, Nas, and even Ms. Braxton herself.

FOXY BROWN/MICHAEL LAVINE, JAY Z/JONATHON MANNION

BUSTA RHYMES

Although not a new face to the hip-hop public, Busta Rhymes finally came forth with his solo outing in '96. Armed with mad charisma, skills to the third power, and a new squad, the inimitable Busta led amped-up screams of "Woo-Haa!" across the atlas. *The Coming*, his gold debut, just reaffirmed the fact that the mighty dragon—never reluctant to put some fun back in rap—could shine without his former crew.



LIL' KIM/ATLANTIC RECORDS, BUSTA RHYMES/JONATHON MANNION

LIL' KIM

The Nine-Sex saw Brooklyn's petite Big Momma come equipped with an X-rated tongue and a Rodeo Drive wardrobe as she sipped Cristal champagne, rode around in E-class Benzo's, and generally enjoyed the lifestyles of the paid and shameless. While mad niggas were fantasizin' about being her main squeeze, the Queen Bee was busy "Gettin' Money" with her notorious mentor and proving that, as always, a no-lose formula for success is S+E+X.

THE ALL SOURCE MIND SQUAD '96 PICKS

NEW ARTISTS OF THE YEAR-GROUP

LOST BOYZ

If catchy hooks and a truly energetic stage presence can guarantee that a group will blow sky-high, the Lost Boyz were stratosphere-bound in '96. Initial troubles with their record label didn't stop the LB Fam from settin' up shop and makin' some *Legal Drug Money* in the process. After an ode to "Jeeps, Lex coupes, Beemers, and the Benz," they provided the theme music for some all too familiar ghetto drama with "Renee," and delivered the bouncy, club jam, "Music Makes Me High."

CRUCIAL CONFLICT

Seizing the opportunity during the played-out East/West tension, this 4-pack from the nation's third largest city let it be known that, although NYC and Cali may claim more than the lion's share of hip-hop's heavyweights, Chi-town refused to stay far behind. Replete with a countrified twang and rhyme cadences reminiscent of a square dance, "Hay," their bugged out yet infectuous gold-selling homage to the almighty cannabis, was only a taste of the unique sound explored on their debut, *The Final Tic.*

CRUCIAL CONFLICT/DANIEL HASTINGS, LOST BOYS/UNIVERSAL

HELTAH SKELTAH/CARL POSEY, GOODIE MOB/LA FACE

GOODIE MOB

Just when we thought we knew everything there is to know about Georgia and the rest of good ol' Dixieland, along came this four-some from Atlanta to school us on the actual state of the "Dirty South." Besides reminding us how much we missed that down home cookin' on the mellow "Soul Food," the George Orwell-esque "Cell Therapy" dropped mad science on the powers that be and had us all double checkin' our windows.

HELTAH SKELTAH

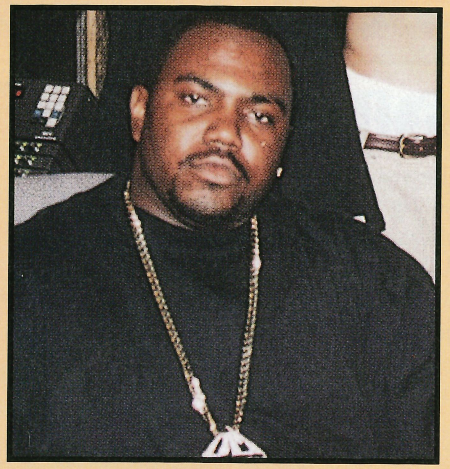
The Boot Camp Army was definitely on the offensive during the nine-half dozen. Along with fellow Fab Fivers OGC, this duo intensified the attack that was begun by Black Moon and Smif-n-Wessun. Ruck and Rock, one of the illest tag-teams in hip-hop, brought their subterranean voices and battle-ready flows to the front lines and firmly entrenched themselves. Make no mistake about it, the kids who brought us *Nocturnal* are definitely holdin' fort.

THE ALL SOURCE MIND SQUAD '96 PICKS

PRODUCERS OF THE YEAR

TRACKMASTERS

The duo of Poke and Tone definitely had the Midas touch on lock for much of the '96. Everyone from LL to Nas to Foxy Brown benefited from the Trackmasters' mastery of that elusive beast—the radio-friendly hip-hop song. They came complete with accessible hooks and familiar samples. Look for this team to continue their winning ways into the next year.



DJ UNEEK

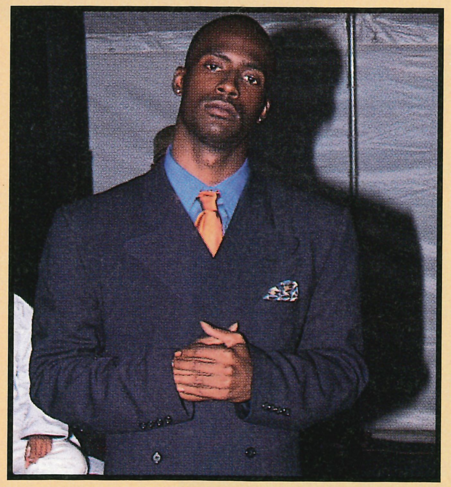
A large portion of the success enjoyed by Bone Thugs-N-Harmony can be thrown towards this beat-wizard. Giving Bones Thugs the solid background for their harmonic chanting, the combination generated by his mellow, R&B-inspired vibes, and the Cleveland quartet's soulful musings has resulted in the multi-platinum "Bone sound," a phenomenon that shows little sign of slowing down.

JERMAINE DUPRI

In terms of sheer volume, the head honcho of SoSo Def probably put out more work than any other major producer this year. Scope the resume: Da Brat, Kris Kross, MC Lyte, Yo Yo, Whodini, and, of course, assorted remixes and whatnot. Expect this major architect of the "Hotlanta" aesthetic to keep right on dipping into that retro bag, delivering the goodies and cashing the checks.

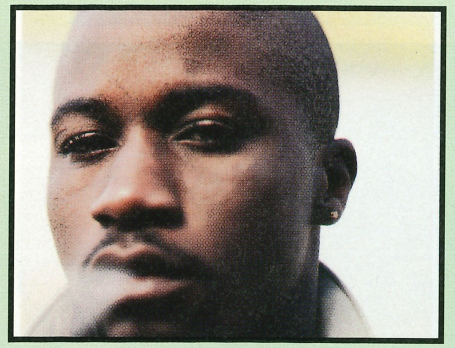
RZA

The hollow-tip production that made *Only Built For Cuban Linx* and *Enter The 36 Chambers* helafied classics, continued to shine this year through the man formerly known as Prince Rakeem. GZA's album, future classics like "America" (Wu's joint on *America Is Dying Slowly*), "Motherless Child" and "Winter Warz," along with Ghostface's debut (or sophomore joint, depending on your perspective) *Ironman*, only cemented his hold on super-producer status. Now that RZA's graduated to the executive side of things, who knows what we can expect from Wu-Tang's forefather?



ORGANIZED NOIZE

If any team of producers got the point across this year it was Rico Wade, Pat Brown and Ray Murray, known throughout the industry as Organized Noize. Their extra crispy production was sported with style by label-mates Outkast and Goodie Mob in a fashion that had fans asking, "Damn, who did their production?" The future bodes well for this down-home bunch of sonic alchemists.



HAVOC OF MOBB DEEP

MC/producer or producer/MC? Whatever the case, one half of Mobb Deep emerged in the '96 as one of the premier beat-masters in hip-hop, showing no limit to his talent in the game with projects ranging from Nas to Foxy Brown to Rapper Noyd to the fully-Havoctized follow-up, Hell on Earth. I guess watching greats like Primo and Extra P at work pays off. And not only did he set himself apart from the pre-mentioned mentors, but he also created a dark style of production that should place him among the finest hip-hop producers for '96 and beyond.

JERMAINE DUPRI/JAY LASH, RZA/RACHELLE CLINTON, ORGANIZED NOIZE/MAURICE MCINNIS, HAVOC/MICHAEL KENNETH LOPEZ

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THE SOURCE MIND SQUAD '96 PICKS

VIDEOS OF THE YEAR

"CROSSROADS"

Bone Thugs-N-Harmony
Director: Michael Martin
Inspiration: death, notions of mortality, etc.

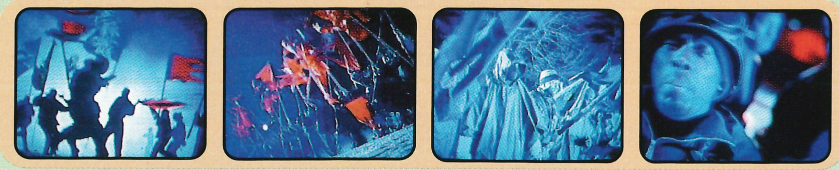
Hands down the most asked about video in '96. Haunting special effects and a powerful story line had the request lines hot and visions of mortality running rampant. Although a better visual effect of Eazy-E could've been used, it still earns the honor as best rap video in 1996.

Comin' up slammin' Cadillac doors

"ELEVATORS"

Outkast
Director: Michael Martin
Inspiration: *Predator, E.T., Aliens*, etc.

Straight out of the pages of Outkast Comics comes "Elevators." We find the ATLiens and their people on the trails of an Egyptian Shangri-La, while being pursued by the Mankind Allumination Networks in chemical containment suits. Much resemblance to the classic *Predator* flick. Wonder if the comic book is available... the action figures even.



"SHADOWBOXING/ 4THCHAMBER"

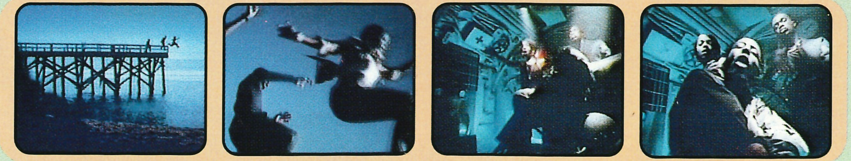
GZA featuring Wu-Tang
Director: GZA
Inspiration: *Swordsman 3, East is Red*, and *Blade of Fury*

War is the objective for this heavy piece of cinema—a visual trip through the battle plans of Method Man, Genius and Ghostface. Extra slickness comes from the 100-man flag collision, Killa Priest's attack observation from between two pillars of ivory, and RZA's offbeat jewels. Impressive directing from clansman GZA.

"YA PLAYIN' YASELF"

Jeru the Damaja
Director: Nick Kwest
Inspiration: 1000 Kung-Fu flicks

Here's a last minute entry that wins hands down for best physical [martial arts] effects. The video doesn't go with the song, but the shit is too fat to pay mind to that. Production and stunt coordination were handled by Grand Harvest, whose credits include Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan flicks. With only three weeks training, Jeru's chops, kicks and body-tossing antics had heads *swearing* he was a kung-fu pro.

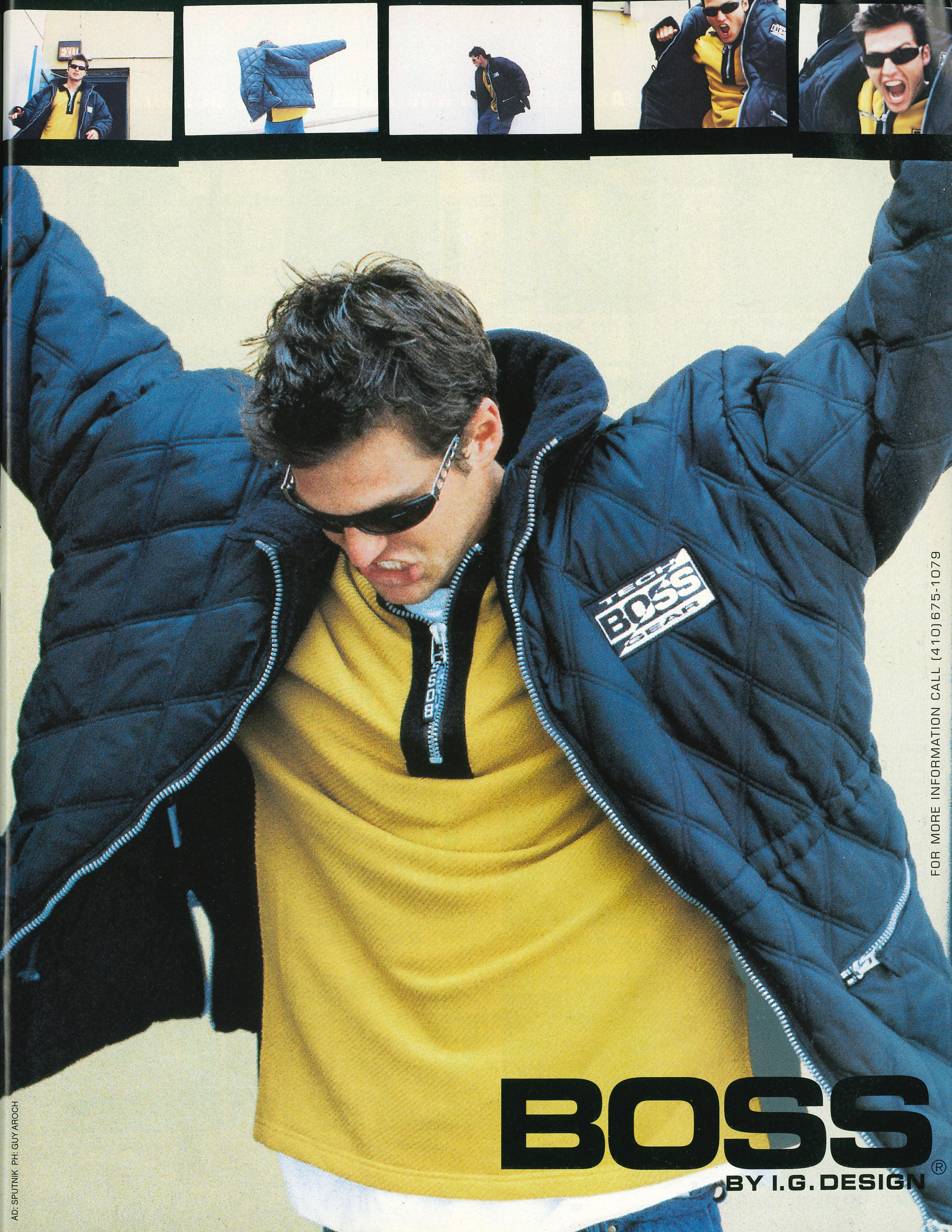


"READY OR NOT"

The Fugees
Director: Marcus Nespal
Inspiration: James Bond flicks with a touch of *Crimson Tide* and *Hunt for Red October*

Literally the deepest and most detailed rap video this year, "Ready Or Not" took us on a hip-hop mini-movie. Submarines and oceans set the pace for the song's eerie background, while the excellent cinematography dipped the viewer 20,000 leagues beneath the sea... Imax Style even.

REBECCA SHAVULSKY AND ERIC RUSS



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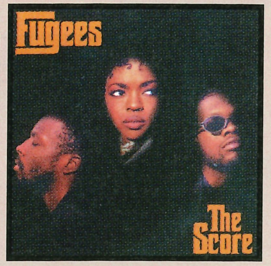
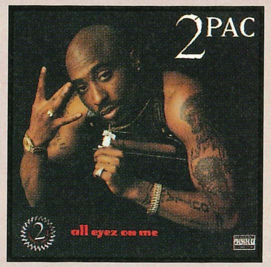
Mr. Smith
Def Jam

THE FUGEES


Fugees
The Score

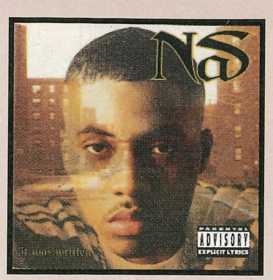
The Score
Columbia

TUPAC


2PAC
all eyez on me

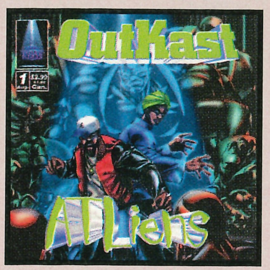
All Eyez On Me
Death Row

NAS



It Was Written
Columbia

OUTKAST


OutKast
ATLiens

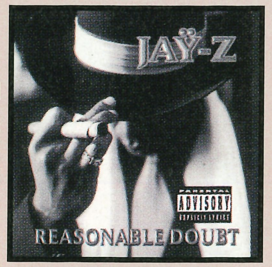
ATLiens
LaFace

GETO BOYS

geto boys
The Resurrection

The Resurrection
Rap-A-Lot

JAY Z


JAY-Z
REASONABLE DOUBT

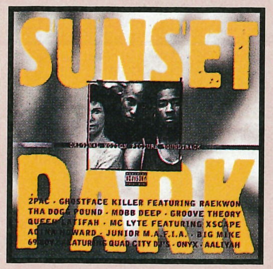
Reasonable Doubt
Roc-A-Fella

BUSTA RHYMES

BUSTA RHYMES
THE COMING

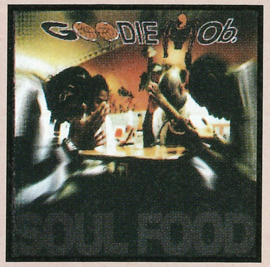
The Coming
Elektra

VARIOUS ARTISTS


SUNSET
PARK

Sunset Park
East West

GOODIE MOB


GOODIE MOB
SOUL FOOD

Soul Food
LaFace

GENIUS

GENIUS/GZA
LIQUID SWORDS

Liquid Swords
Geffen

THE PHARCYDE

the pharcyde
LABCABINCALIFORNIA

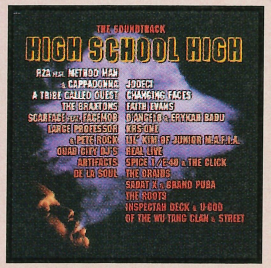
Labcabincalifornia
Delicious Vinyl

LOST BOYZ

lost boyz
legal drug money

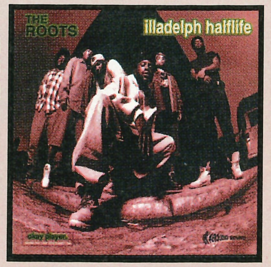
Legal Drug Money
Universal

VARIOUS ARTISTS


HIGH SCHOOL HIGH

High School High
Big Beat

THE ROOTS


THE ROOTS
illadelph halflife

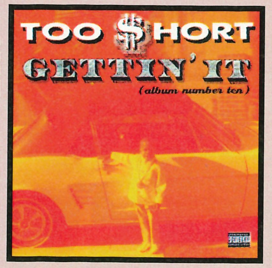
Illadelphalflife
Geffen

DE LA SOUL

stakes is high
de la soul

Stakes Is High
Tommy Boy

TOO SHORT


TOO $HORT
GETTIN' IT
(album number ten)

Album Number 10
Jive

HELTAH SKELTAH

HELTAH SKELTAH
NOCTURNAL

Nocturnal
Duck Down/Priority

A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

Beats, Rhymes & Life
Jive

CRUCIAL CONFLICT

The Final Tic
CRUCIAL CONFLICT

The Final Tic
Pallas/Universal

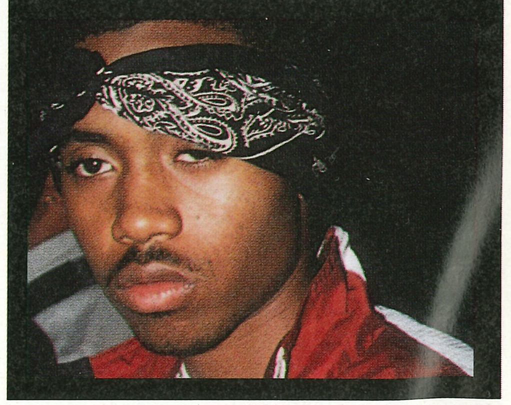
fat tape '96
THE BEST HIP-HOP SONGS OF THE YEAR

"ELEVATORS"	OUTKAST
"AFFIRMATIVE ACTION"	NAS W/AZ, FOXY BROWN, CORMEGA
"CROSSROADS"	BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY
"AIN'T NO NIG*A"	JAY Z W/FOXY BROWN
"PO' PIMP"	DO OR DIE
"WOO-HA"	BUSTA RHYMES
"CALIFORNIA LOVE"	TUPAC W/DR. DRE
"FUGEE-LA"	THE FUGEES
"HAY"	CRUCIAL CONFLICT
"DANGER"	BLAHZAY BLAHZAY
"GOT MY MIND..."	TUPAC W/ METH, REDMAN & DOGG POUND
"LEFLAH LEFLOUR..."	FAB FIVE
"BOW DOWN"	WESTSIDE CONNECTION
"GET MONEY" REMIX	JUNIOR M.A.F.I.A.
"SPACE"	8BALL & MJG
"LOUNGIN'" (REMIX)	LL COOL J
"CELL THERAPY"	GOODIE MOB
"MOTHERLESS CHILD"	GHOSTFACE KILLAH
"GETTIN' IT"	TOO SHORT
"STAKES IS HIGH"	DE LA SOUL
"THE WORLD'S A GHETTO"	GETO BOYS
"RENEE"	LOST BOYZ
"PLAYER'S BALL"	E-40 W/TOO SHORT & K-CI
"RIGHT BACK AT YOU"	MOBB DEEP
"5 O'CLOCK"	NONCHALANT
"SHADOWBOXIN'"	GZA W/METHOD MAN
"KEEP ON KEEPIN' ON"	MC LYTE
"YA PLAYIN' YASELF"	JERU THE DAMAJA
"NEVER TALK DOWN"	4TAY, TOO SHORT & BREED
"CLONES"	THE ROOTS
"WHERE YA LOVE AT"	MR. MIKE
"THE MC"	KRS-1
"RUNNIN'"	THE PHARCYDE
"GET A HOLD"	TRIBE CALLED QUEST
"EAST COAST KILLA..."	GROUP THERAPY
"THE WAR'S ON"	ALMIGHTY RSO W/MOBB DEEP
"IF I RULED THE WORLD"	NAS W/LAURYN
"MY BROTHER MY ACE"	SMOOTHE & TRIGGER
"DAYS OF OUR LIVEZ"	BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY
"READY OR NOT"	FUGEES

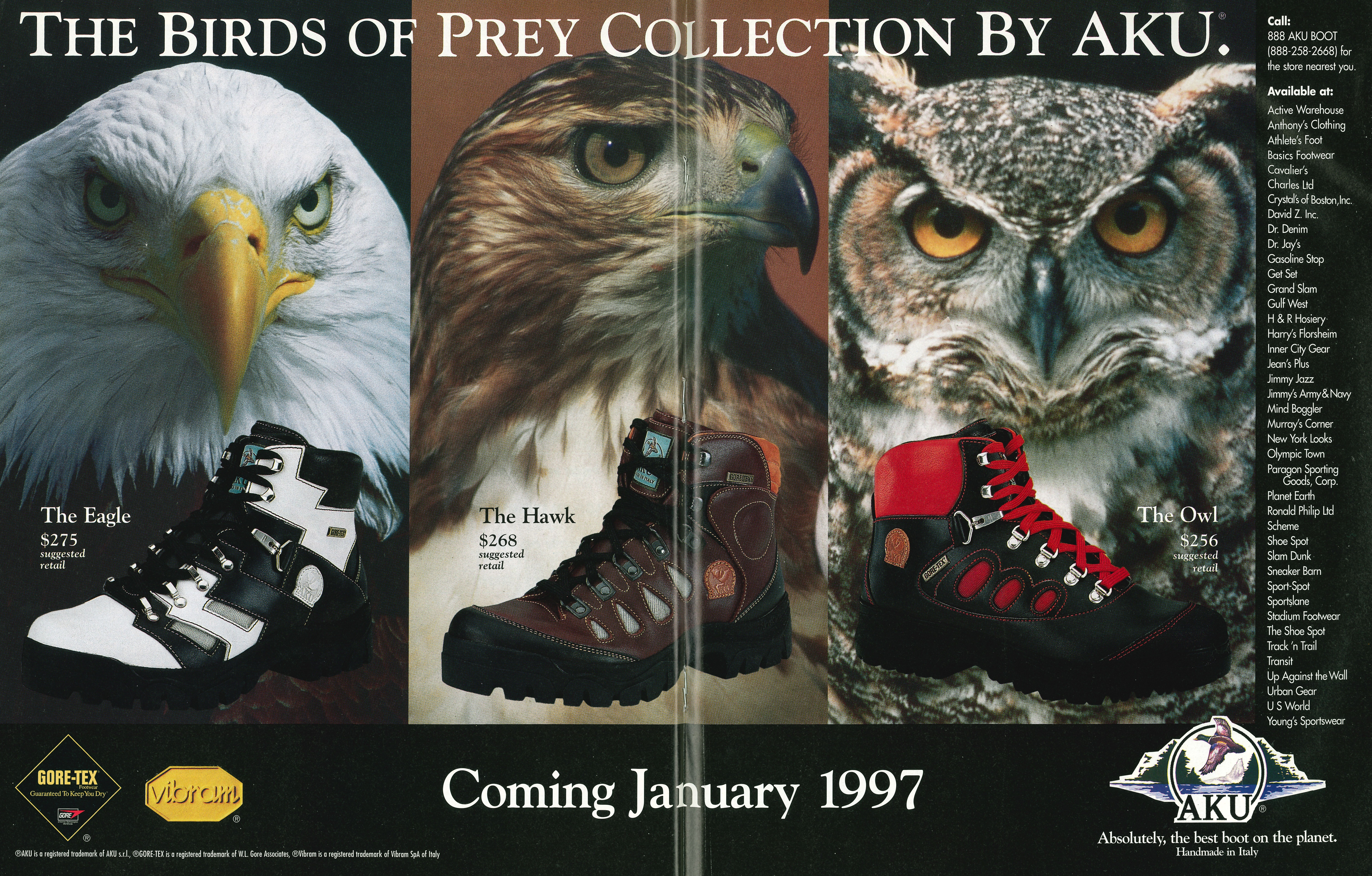
"HIP-HOP QUOTABLE"

Yo, weeks went by and I'm surprised
Still stuck in a shelf with all the things
That an outlaw hides
Besides me it's bullets, two vests and a nine
There's a grenade in a box and the tech
That kept cryin'
'Cause he ain't been cleaned in a year
He rusty a clear, he's about to fall
To pieces 'cause of his murder career
Yo I can hear somebody coming in
Open the shelf
His eyes bubbling, he said "it was on"
I felt his palm troubled shaking
Somebody stomped him out
His dome was aching
He placed me on his waist
The moment I've been waiting
My creation was for Blacks to kill Blacks
It's gats like me that accidentally
Go off making niggas memories
But this time, it's done intentionally
He brought me outside saw this cat
Cocked me back said "remember me"
He pulled the trigger but I held on
It felt wrong, knowing niggas is waiting
In hell for him
He squeezed harder I didn't budge
Sick of the blood
Sick of the thugs
Sick of the wrath of the next man's grudge
What the other kid did was pull out
No doubt,
A newer me in better shape
Before he left he lead a chase
My owner fell to the floor his wig split
So fast I didn't know he was hit
It's over with
Heard mad niggas runnin' cops is comin
Now I'm happy until I felt somebody else grab me
...Damn

NAS, from "I Gave You Power," off the album *It Was Written*



JAMES MOORE



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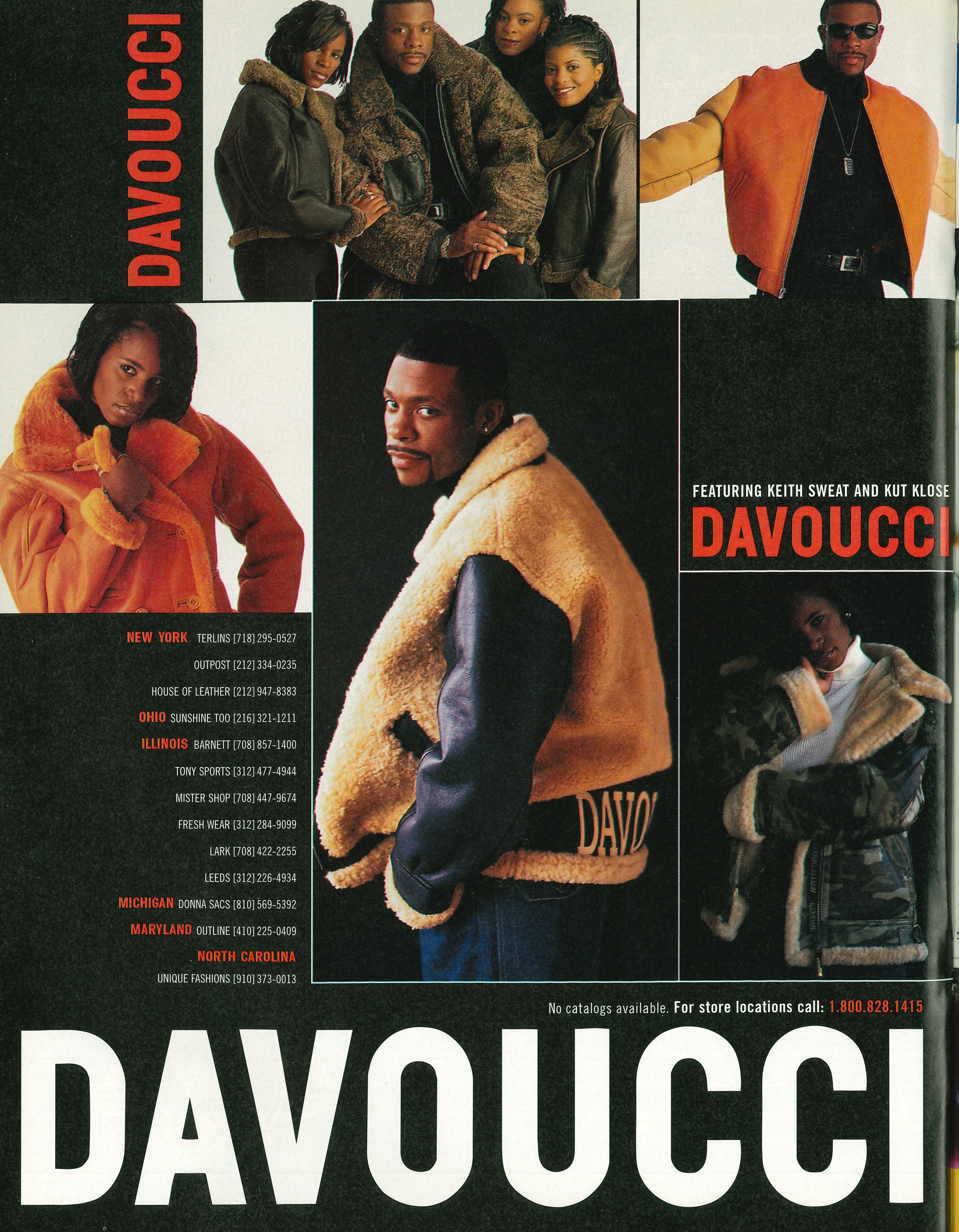

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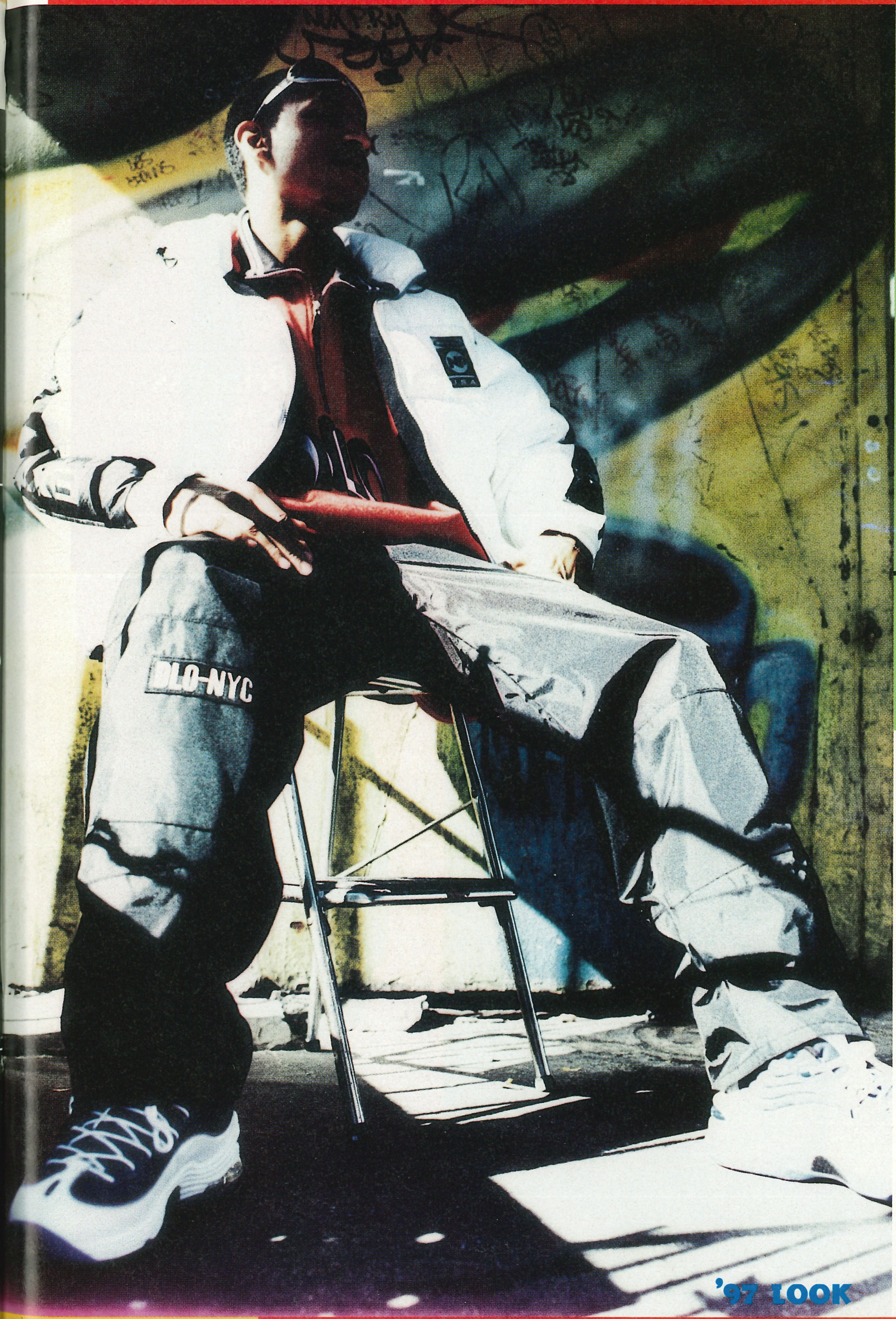
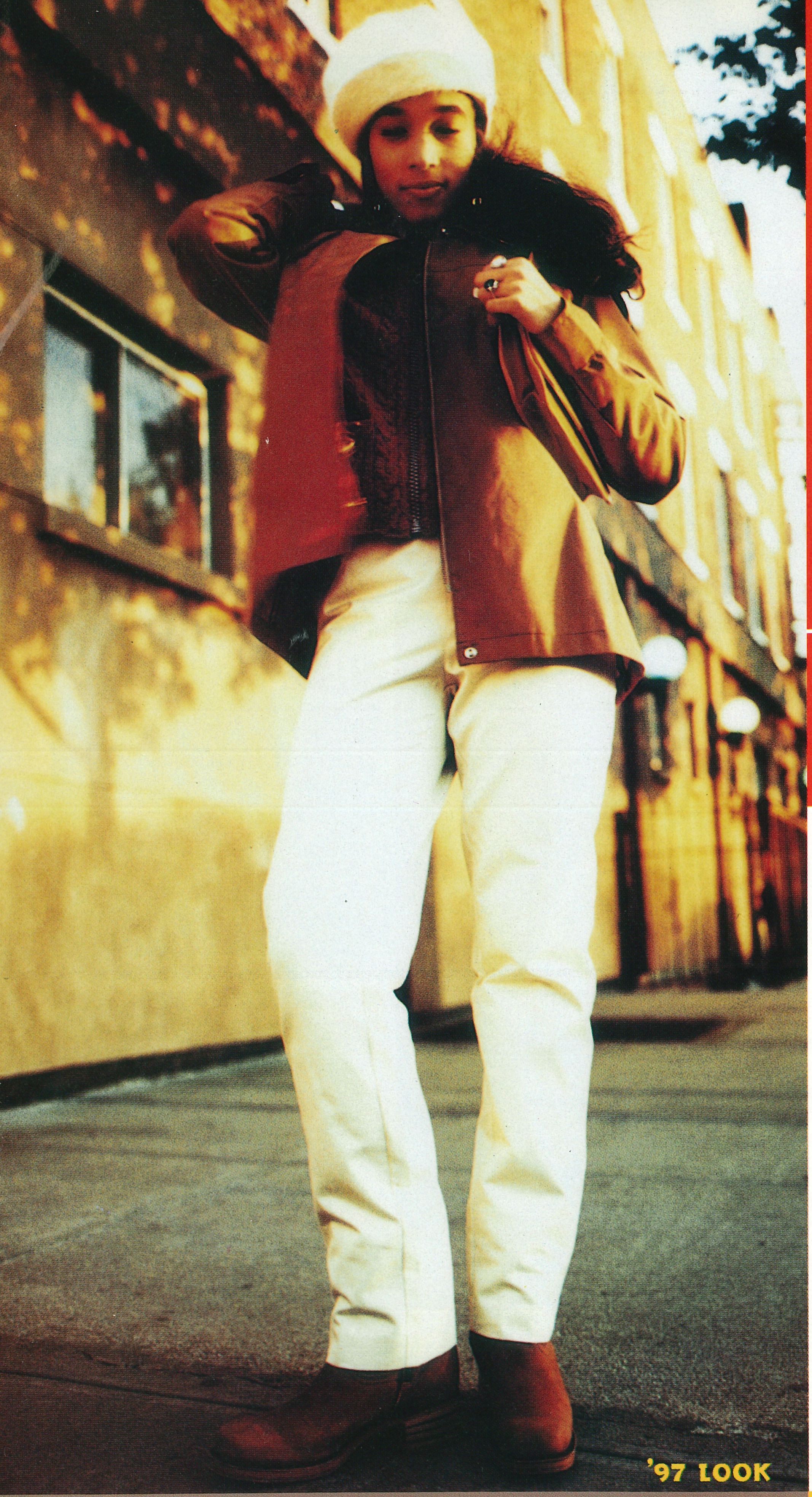

'97 LOOK

Ruffneck

Red polar fleece top by OLO-NYC; black nylon ski pants by OLO-NYC; black and white down jacket by North Peak; sneakers by Nike; eyewear by Adidas.

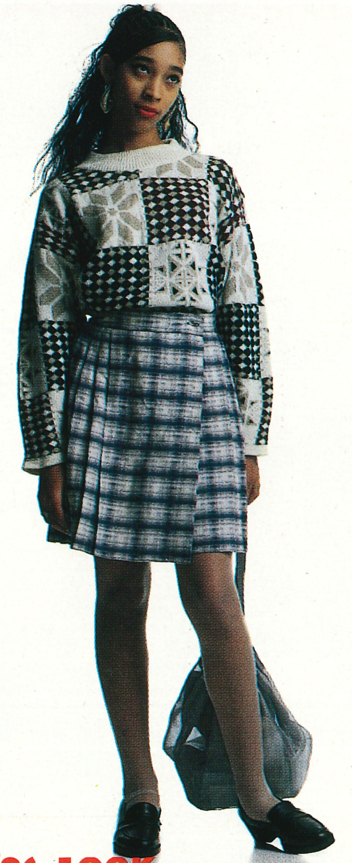
'96 LOOK

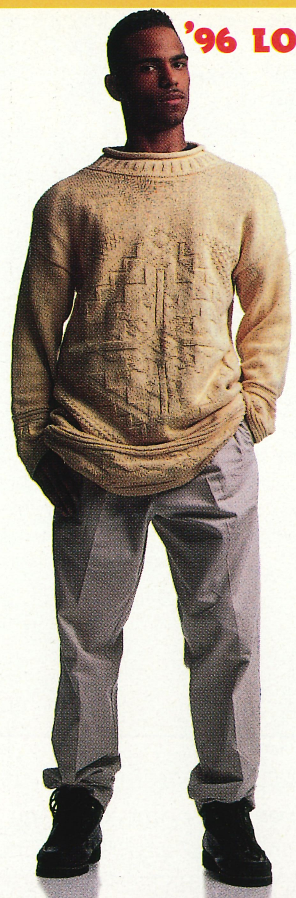
PHOTOGRAPHY BY REBECCA HARMAN & FABRICE TROMBERT



Ghetto Princess

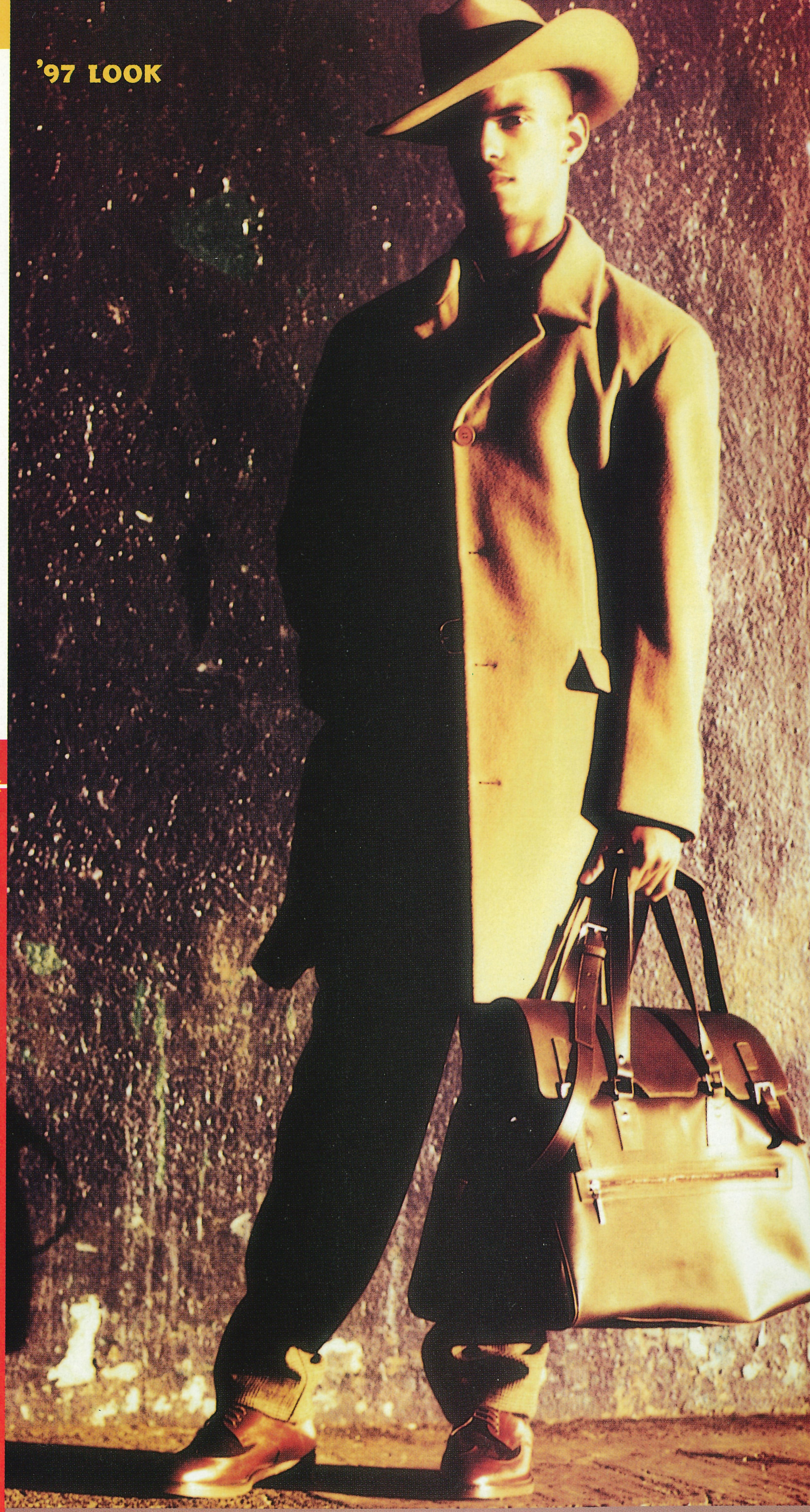
Brown sweater by Joop!; tan pants by Esprit; brown nylon jacket by Esprit; tan boots by Frye; brown handbag by Jill Stuart; hat by Kangol.





GQ Don

Camel coat by New Boxer Italia; button front shirt by New Boxer Italia; wool pants by New Boxer Italia; shoes by Kenneth Cole Unlisted; cowboy hat by Knox Hatters.



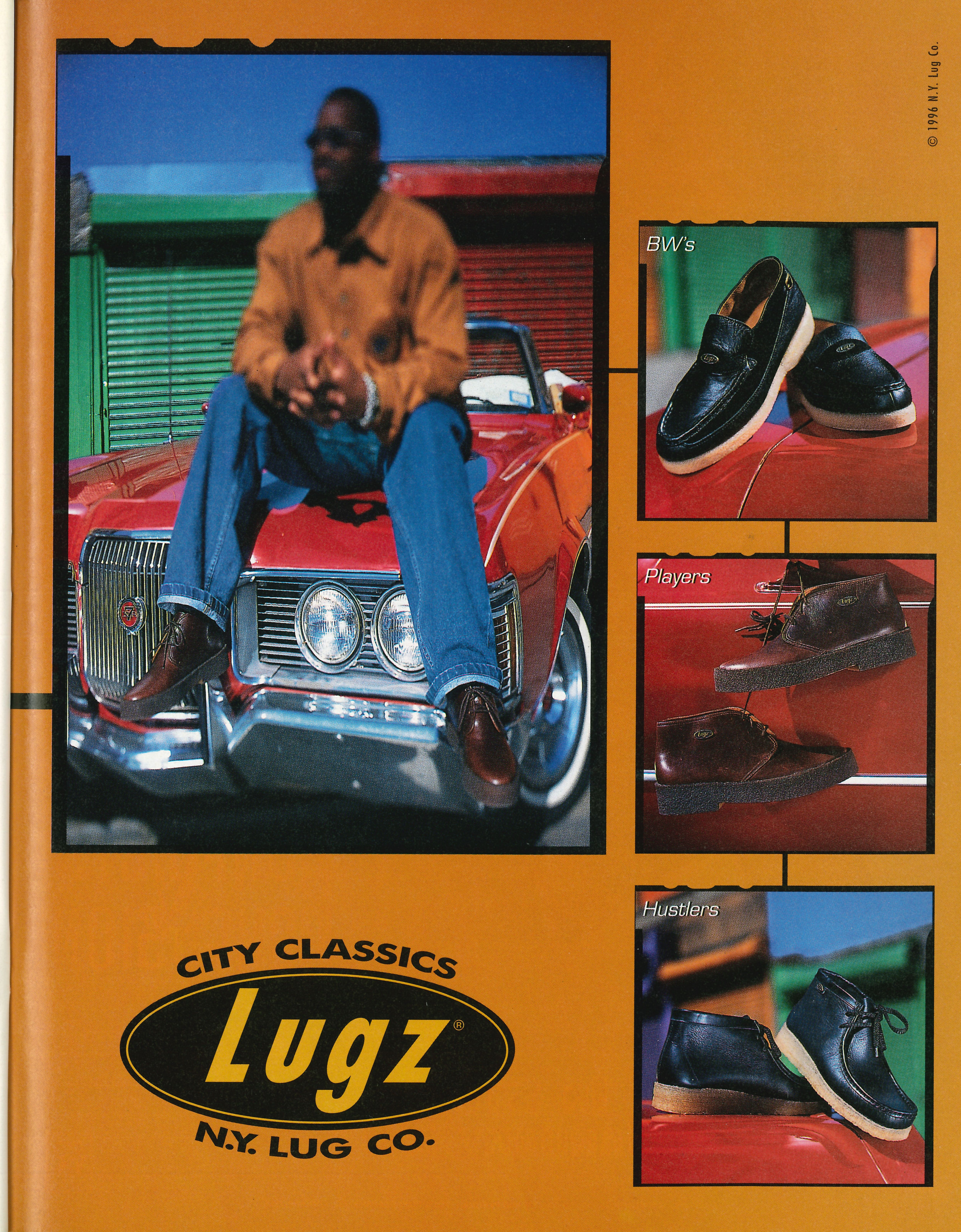
FASHION DIRECTOR: ROGER McKENZIE
STYLISTS: MONICA MORROW & CLYTO ROSE
MAKE-UP-ARTIST: ROMELL
ASSISTED by : ROSALYN FORCH

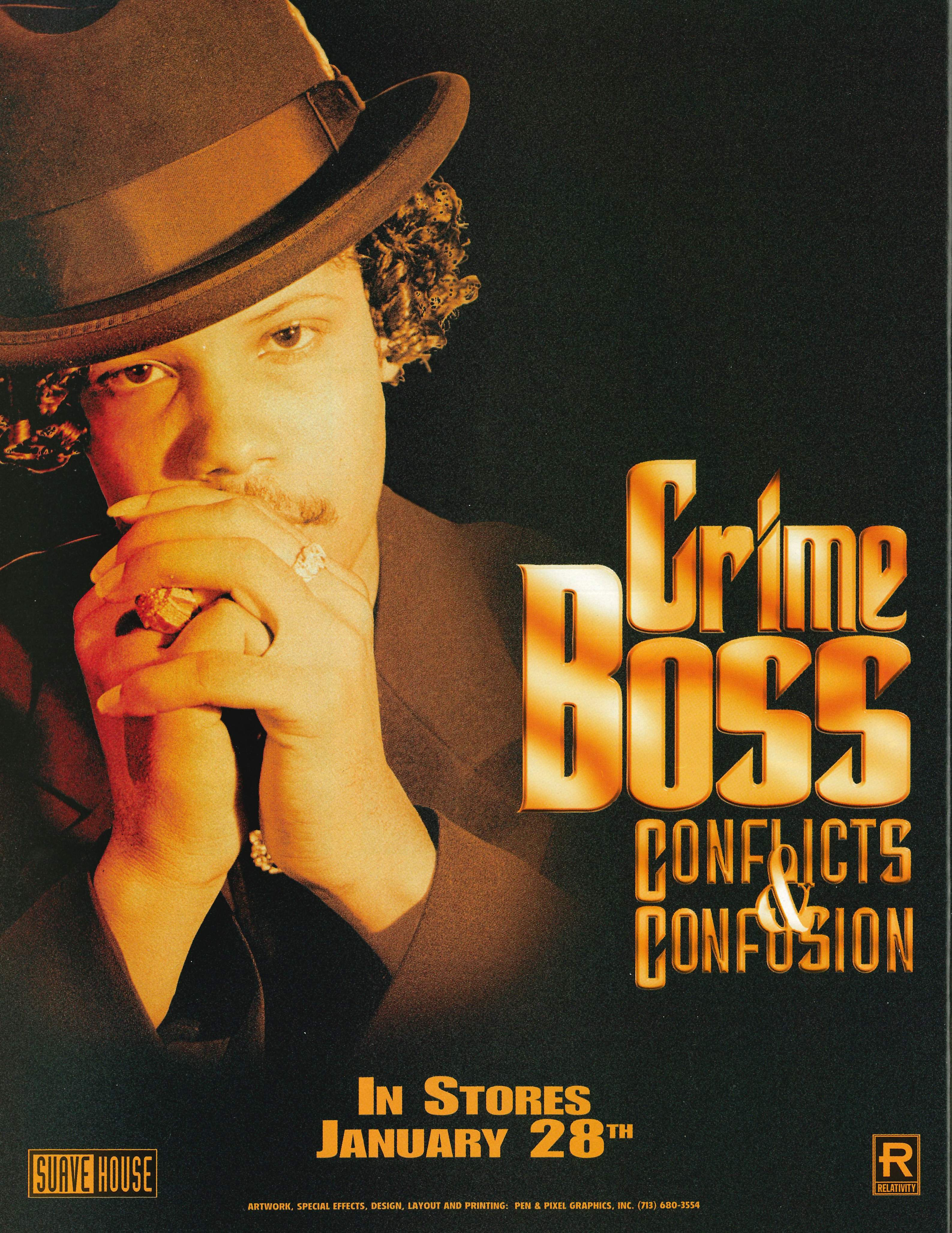
CREDIT

Esprit	available at select Macy's nationwide
Frye	available at Here & Now and Macy's
Joop!	available at finer stores nationwide
New Boxer Italia	(212) 265-0044
Kenneth Cole Unlisted	(800) KEN-COLE
Knox Hatter	(212) 768-3787
DLO-NYC	(212) 631-9200
North Peak	(888) NOR-PEAK
Nike	(503) 671-3939
Adidas	(800) 448-1796
Tripp	(212) 982-3590
Rj-Colt	(800) 883-COLT
Jill Stuart	available at Big Drop (212) 966-4299
Lip Service	available at better retail stores nationwide

B-Girl

White crop top by Esprit; blue hip hugger rubber pants by Danny Goodman for Tripp NYC; black nylon jacket by Esprit; black and blue gore-tex boots by Rj-Colt; blue handbag by Jill Stuart.





Crime Boss

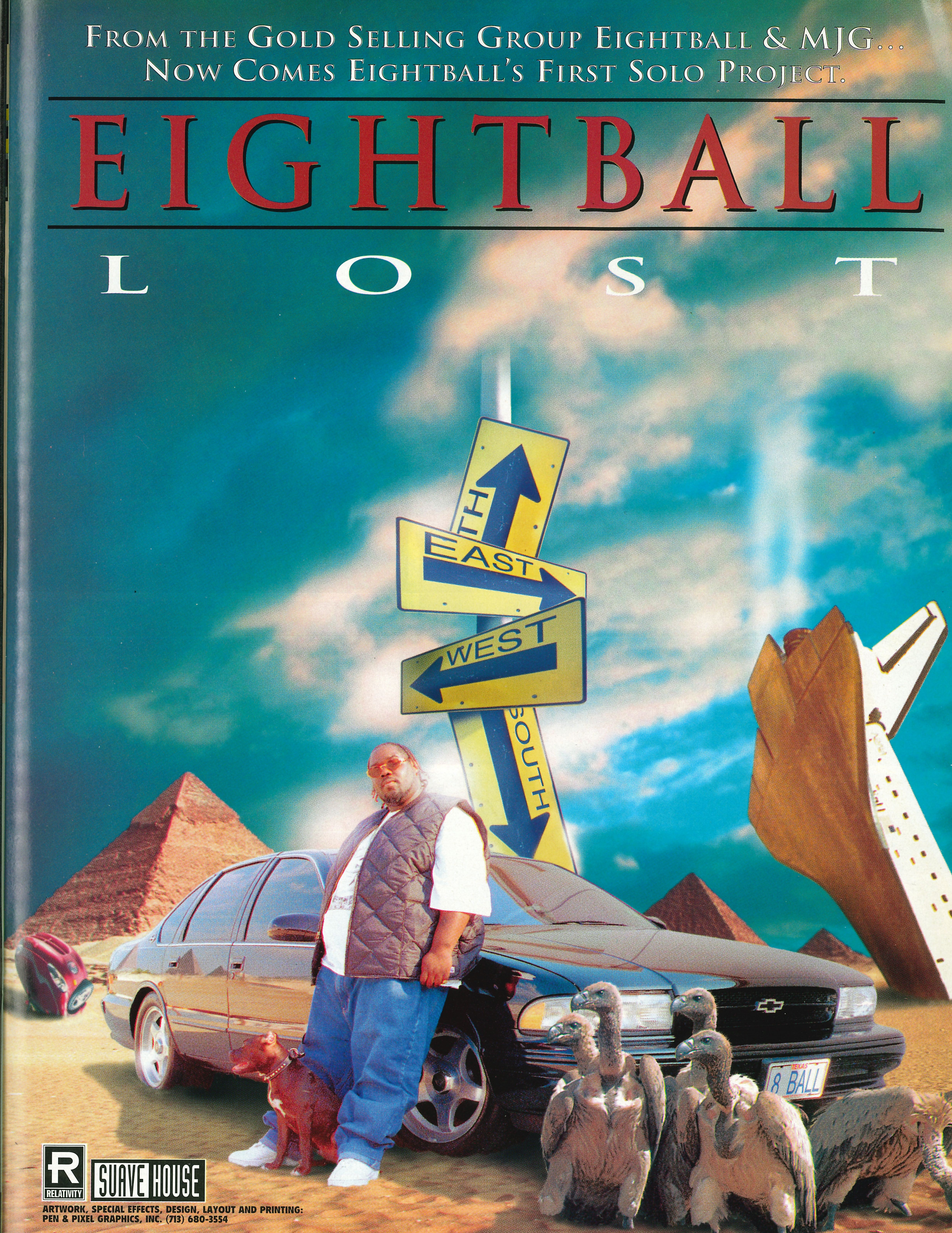
Conflicts & Confusion

IN STORES
JANUARY 28TH

SUAVE HOUSE

R RELATIVITY

ARTWORK, SPECIAL EFFECTS, DESIGN, LAYOUT AND PRINTING: PEN & PIXEL GRAPHICS, INC. (713) 680-3554



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NOW COMES EIGHTBALL'S FIRST SOLO PROJECT.

EIGHTBALL

LOST

R RELATIVITY

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THE YEAR IN PHOTOS

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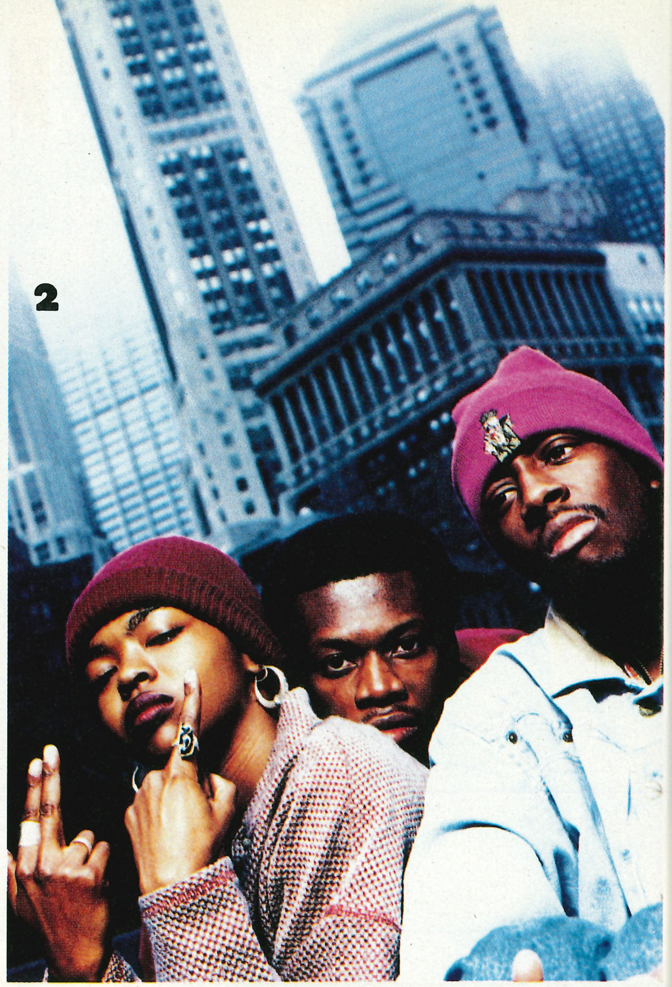
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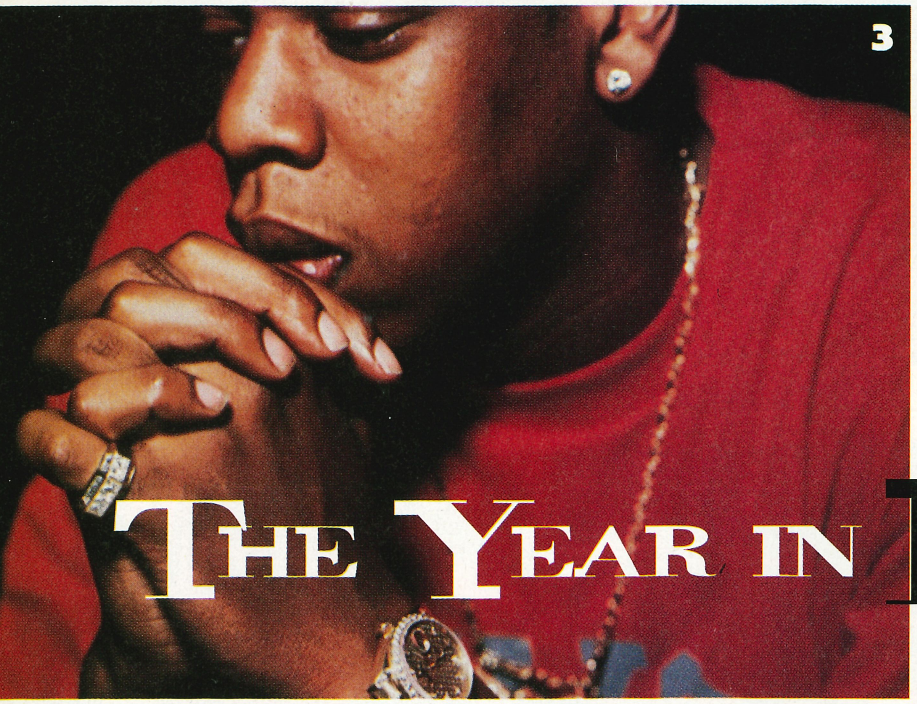
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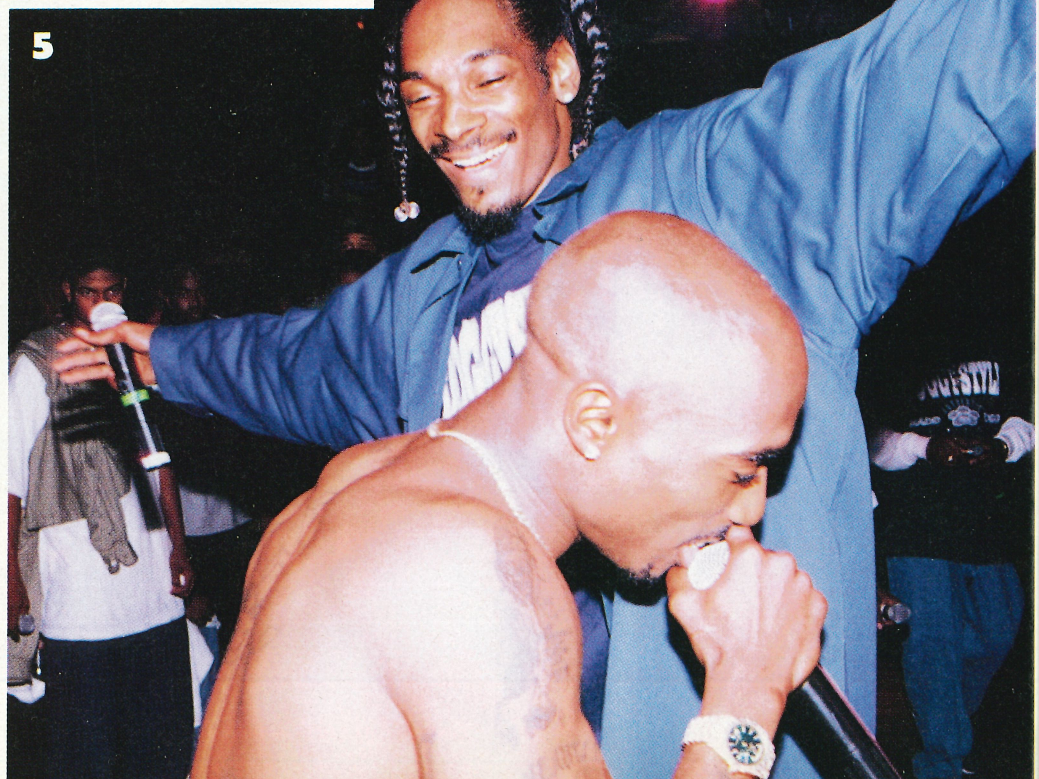
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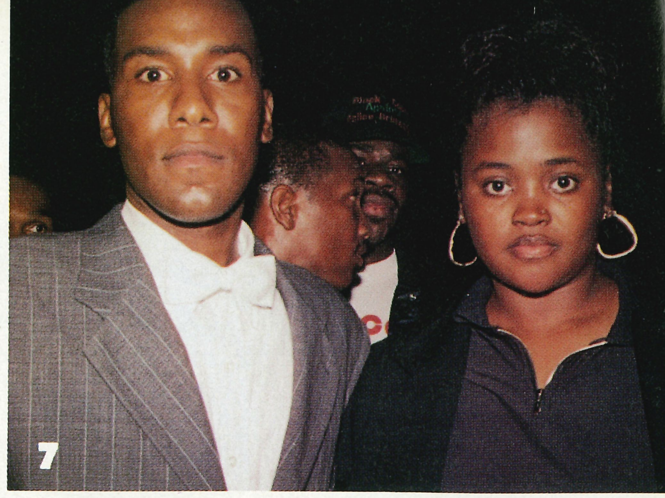
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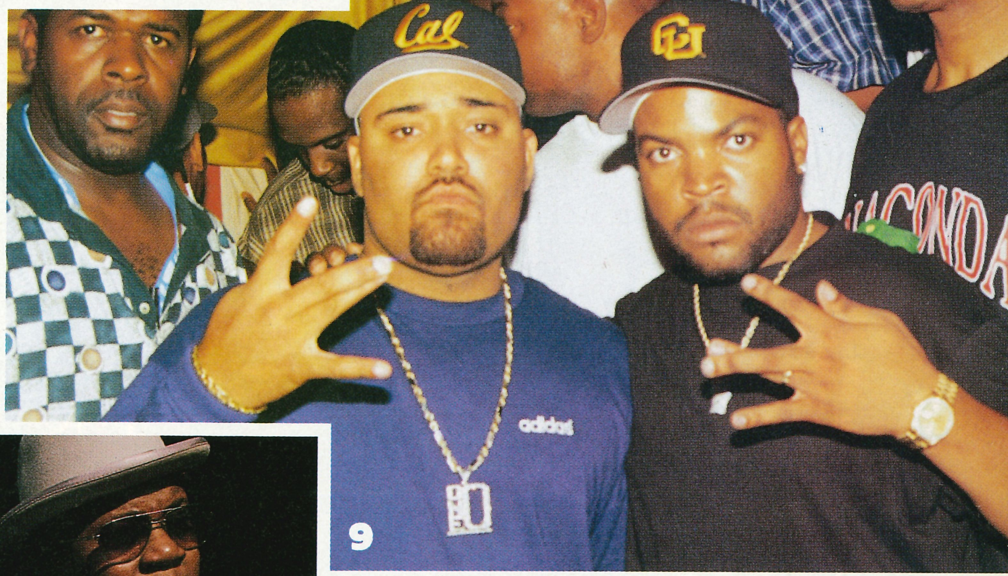
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10

11

1. The Roots and D'Angelo...vibing on creation.
2. From the underground to worldwide, The Fugees.
3. Jay Z counts his successful blessings for the year.
4. The Heavyweights: Mike Tyson and Suge Knight just weeks before Tyson's defeat and Suge's incarceration.
5. Remember the time: Snoop and Tupac loving living onstage and in front of the world.
6. Smiling faces: Outkast reflecting the fun that also lies within their music.
7. Keeping it really real: Community activists Conrad Muhammad and Sister Souljah.
8. Grandmaster Flash, Afrika Bambaataa and Kool Herc give condolences from the true school at Tupac's memorial service in Harlem.
9. The Westside credo enforced to the fullest by Mack 10 and Ice Cube.
10. No stress: A cop and an NOI member at New York's commemorative Day Of Atonement.
11. The hardest working young mogul in the biz takes a moment for reflection.

#1/MPOZI TOLBERT, #2/CARL POSEY, #3/SUE KWON, #4/J. LASH, #5/J. LASH, #6/KAMBUI OLUJIMI, #7/STELLA, #8/STELLA, #9/J. LASH, #10/ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN, #11/MPOZI TOLBERT

The Great Paper Chase

So, it's the end of another year in hip-hop and I'm looking for a theme song. Hmmm, let's see. Ah-ha, how about this ole' school joint? Money, Money, Money, Moneeeey…*Moneeeey!*

Yes folks, in '96 the quest for the almighty green didn't merely take up casual residence in hip-hop's collective consciousness, it moved in with all its baggage and put a dead bolt on the door. Economic obsession helped launch trends—"Yeah, I'm an ex-drug dealing, Lex-driving, eight pinky-ring wearing, high-maintenance girl-having, playalistic, mentality-rocking type individual, plus…I rhyme. What?!!!—and anti-trends—"Yeah, fuck your luciano mentality, materialistic identity, jewel-adorned physicality and the E-Class you rode in on." Economic machinations spawned a slew of individual success stories—The Fugees, Bone, Tupac, Nas, et. al—despite a hostile retail environment and a shrinking market share. And new economic avenues saw deals launched [RZA, Dre, etc.], the prevalence of rappers as pitchmen for major commercial products grow exponentially, and a deluge of female MCs slice out a whole new market demographic.

What this means, my friends, Romans and countrymen, is that our beloved hip-hop has fully entered the zone of commodified culture. As I see it, two things immediately come to mind: (1) Despite the contrary wishes of us purist types, hip-hop is BIG business, with all the connotations (particularly the negative ones) that the term denotes. So all the "undergrounding" and "back inna days" reminiscing won't change *that* fact. See, it's kinda like move it or lose it, 'cause turning ya back on the "above-ground" (as it were) in some kinda "money equates less real"-induced huff is risky business. Firstly, we run the risk of mirroring jazz's tragically diminished melanin involvement (on a listener level). Secondly, the exploitative powers-that-be are still gonna milk the form for all it's worth. Now, do we really wanna be another generation in a long line of cultural innovators pimped into economic invisibility?

Having said all that, here's the second point: mufuckas still—generally speaking—ain't shit. Sure, Puffy does his thing, and Suge may be the apple of every baby gangster's eye; but the vast majority of heads' idea of managing business is the bastardized offspring of street ethics and traditional corporate sharkisms (you know, pull heat, trash offices, spend up advance money on bullshit). Plus, cats are *still* gettin' bent, twisted, and generally done up every which way but loose by the true brokers of power. Final analysis: the marriage of hip-hop and capitalist/corporate dictates is here to stay. Get used to it, learn to use it. Don't abuse it. So my fellow beatminers, here comes the mighty SOURCE Mind Squad to make some sense of the weird juxtaposition of hip-hop and power/money/influence, and the manner in which that unholy combination bubbled and boiled in '96. Good night folks, see ya next year.

SELWYN SEYFU HINDS
CEO, VOCABULIST ENTERPRISES INC.

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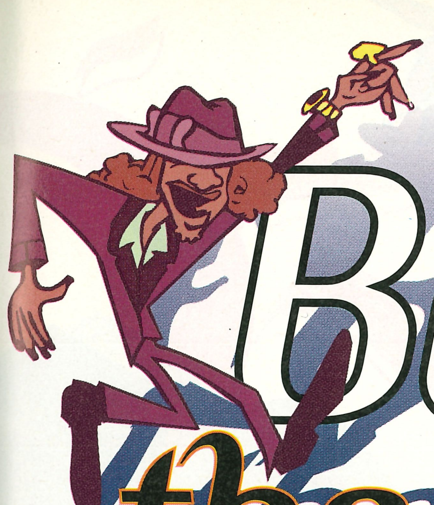

Beyond the Coasts

AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR'S WORTH OF RHETORIC, HYPE AND HYPERBOLE, IT'S TIME TO REALLY TAKE STOCK OF THE EAST/WEST SITUATION AND ADDRESS THE TRUE DEMONS WITHIN

By Kris ex D. Cypol

Can we talk about hip-hop for a minute? No, can we really speak on the issues of our subculture for just a few minutes? Not some ole "I live, shit and drink hip-hop" discourse on the window dressing of this game, but, hopefully, an attempt at unbiased, pertinent thought on our progress or lack thereof?

See, if we really want to talk about certain things, niggaz, nigettes and others need to get off that shit about patting themselves on the back, detrain ourselves from the self-aggrandizing, romanticizing colloquialisms we've adopted—"Hip-hop Culture," "Hip-hop nation," et al—and realize that we are far from holy crusaders on some fierce jihad against the establishment [see: references to Illuminati, New World Order, White World Supremacy]. But rather, for the most part, just some fools bound together by common experiences and musical tastes that, no matter how differentiated on the surface, flow from a singular stream of discontent.

Having hit you with that spiel, let me pose a question: what the hell was going on this year with the so-called East/West situation? How much of that shit, if any, was substantive, and how much was the result of the machinations of overblown egos? Did heads on the perceived poles of the conflict [NY and Cali] really sit down hatching plots and venting dark sentiments, or were we all just caught up in the luciano-fueled issues of a minority? What the fuck was real, what was myth, what was sheer hype and does anyone really give a goddamn? These are the questions; let us proceed with the investigation.

History is usually the best distiller of fact. That truism also applies here. With the commercial successes of Tone-Loc and N.W.A at the end of the eighties, the bandwagon mentality of the music business kicked into full swing. Like the great "gold rush" of the '40s and '50s, the industry's focus changed from its East Coast birthplace and set up shop under the palm trees of sunny California. While speaking upon the same issues as some of their Right Coast predecessors, hip-hop's Left Side counterparts waxed eloquence in mannerisms that reflected the LA gang subculture that spawned its first commercially-viable national acts.

Pointedly, the mentality and lifestyle in California is different from that of New York, if for no other reason than the fact that the two regions bear two different countenances. The much proclaimed "West Coast sound" (and that of the rest of the country, for that matter), reflects this to the fullest, with its lulling melodies and rhythmic concoctions acclimated to its open air landscape. The greater portion of that New York shit is just hectic and contrapuntal, the perfect soundtrack for the city's convoluted and dense existence. But, whether it's the melodic contours of Dr. Dre or the repetitive percussive manipulations of DJ Premier, it's all a provocative blend of survivalist blues coupled with inherent b-boy bravado to meet adversity with just a modicum of equanimity. The majority of hip-hop aficionados understand this—hip-hop is destined to come from many tongues and speak to different regions. We don't always like it, care for it, or greet it with open arms, but, heck, albeit begrudgingly at times, we accept it.

But, lo and behold, the majority do not control the consumable best of hip-hop—not that part of it which comes with a price tag anyway. That part is under the auspices of a select few (the six major labels, if we wanna call out names) who choose to cater to the fickle, vacillating whims of the hip-hop consumer and fan, while turning a deaf ear to the needs and cries of hip-hop's integral, integrity-laden cultural and artistic core. The mentality at these labels is simple: if a certain sound can sell, label it—gangsta rap, in this scenario—put it in a boat, let it swarm the shelves and ride that horse until its last leg is broken.

When this capitalist schema led to a prominence of California based artists in the

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TODD JAMES

THE MOST FRUSTRATING ASPECT OF THIS DILEMMA IS THAT IT HAS ITS ROOTS IN REAL AND ACTUAL STRIFES THAT COULD BE UNDERSTOOD—AND POSSIBLY OVERCOME—WITH SIMPLE, OPEN-MINDED DIALOGUE.

marketplace, it caused the East Coast to feel neglected to a certain extent, hence a record such as Tim Dog's "Fuck Compton." Obviously the West Coast wasn't happy about such sentiments and the seeds of cross-coastal rivalry were planted. That discontent grew after gangsta artists came under fire from political powers that be; specifically because many East Coasters weren't shy at pointing the finger at the element to whom they attributed hip-hop's increasingly negative light. Finally, rebuttal came into full flesh this past year—spearheaded in particular by Ice Cube and his ilk—in the form of the Big "W" being flashed left and right, in shows of West Coast unity.

Unfortunately, the more substantive reasons for coastal disquiet were nearly eclipsed by the ugly, overly publicized drama between Death Row and Bad Boy. While the roots of this "beef" are obviously in some unseen soil, what the public knows is this: While accepting an award at THE SOURCE Awards in August, 1995, in New York, Marion "Suge" Knight, CEO of the LA-based Death Row Records, made comments which were tacitly accepted as a dis to Sean "Puffy" Combs, head of the NY-based Bad Boy Records, and to a lesser degree Jermaine Dupri, CEO of So So Def Recordings in Atlanta. New gasoline was then added to the fire when the late Tupac Shakur—who had implicated Combs, Bad Boy artist Notorious B.I.G. and others, for an apparent attempt on his life in February 1995—was signed to Death Row [October 1995]. The events which followed gave more gas to the East/West tension than all the other cross-coastal incidents in the history of hip-hop combined: a volley of shots let off at the trailer on the set of a video for "New York, New York" by Death Row artists Tha Dogg Pound in Brooklyn; a face off between the camps at the Soul Train Awards in Los Angeles; and Tupac's untethered seething against Bad Boy in print, on TV and on wax (most notably "Hit 'Em Up," a musical tirade which assaults Bad Boy, the Notorious B.I.G.'s group Junior M.A.F.I.A., and others).

However, the truth of the Bad Boy/Death Row conundrum probably has less to do with geography than it does with ego and dollars, since Death Row cites its financial assets as its superiority and Bad Boy seems to be happy by simply making "more money than you can count." Though the surface of this situation points to an East/West friction, to view warring camps as a true Bi-Coastal problem discounts acts such as E-40 and Coolio, both Cali-based artists not taking part in any coastal rhetoric, who rake in the dough for New York's Jive and Tommy Boy record companies respectively.

It seems that, augmented by the historical myths which revolve around gangsterism, such as the idealization of the prohibition days and the founding of Hollywood and Las Vegas, Black America's cry for power, as reflected through the braggadocios swagger of hip-hop, has mixed with the worship of the almighty dollar to form a volatile Molotov cocktail. As street rules come into the boardroom, it needs to be kept in mind that, for all their accumulated wealth and perceived power, Blacks in America are still building castles made of sand while there are laws already on the books which can knock over these budding foundations at anytime the power structure of this nation sees fit.

The true power brokers and shot callers reap benefits in ludicrous amounts and continue to break off crumbs to relative peons below. Slavery (presently in its economic stages) has always been one of the steel girders that have supported this country—those things ain't done changed. We can't get trapped into the fallacies of luxury being presented on TV screens and out of speakers. But, if the ability to purchase ridiculous amounts of material items has become the end goal of putting out hip-hop music, we all need to ask ourselves: What are we really fighting for, anyway?

Regardless, as a battle wages on, both sides hold up their credentials—for the East it's its historic position as pioneers of the art form; on the West they have gold and platinum plaques in abundance. Oddly enough, many purveyors of the debate on both sides hold no claim over the laurels on which they rest their arguments. The most frustrating aspect of this dilemma is that it has its roots in real and actual strifes that could be understood—and possibly overcome—with simple, open-minded dialogue. There are legitimate beefs on the table—the excessive negative media that has targeted largely West Side based artists, a lack of cross-pollination of sensibilities (i.e. radio stations, clubs, publications and video outlets which maintain a regional view of hip-hop)—but the present attempts have not yielded the type of discussion necessary to address the issues, just gross oversimplifications of the malady.

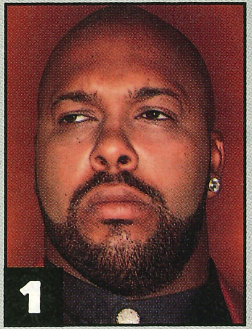
Who's to blame for this East/West schism? Primary level: Capitalism—it's that mentality that causes the worship of the dollar at all other expense. Secondary level: Radio stations, video outlets and all other media (mainstream and otherwise)—we, albeit unknowingly at times—add sticks to this nasty mess with limited playlists, stratified programming and segregated views. Tertiary level: Everyone else—our clarion calls for a bi-coastal battle; off-the-dome generalizations and harangues, whether in the crib with your homies or in a club with a thousand of your supporters; and a lack of willingness to bring the correct issues to the table are not helping the problem. At all.

So who's to solve the problem? Damn, that's where we get stuck. What *is* known is that many of these self-proclaimed, hip-hop millionaires lack tutelage and guidance. We have heads of record labels and artists that may never have had a disposable income prior to their ascent on the rap game, raking in loochie in unprecedented amounts. If you've been making $20,000 a year for your whole life, then you come into large sums of cash, yeah, it can make you crazy and stupid real quick. This, coupled with the '90s microwave ethos which is rearing a generation that demands everything not now, but right now, attributes to hip-hop's high turnover rate. Big business in general, and the entertainment industry in particular, has always favored finding "new Blood" to suck at the expense of established talent. It is much simpler and more economical to run the same old trick on new dogs then to create new and creative ways to maintain questionable bookkeeping tactics. Henceforth the profitability of hip-hop is making simple things like the cultivation of talent no longer extant. Talk to early Blues, Rock 'N' Roll or Jazz artists and you'll see that they've had the same gripes with the recording industry that Rap artists have today. What is really needed is an exchange of inter-generational knowledge with these "Old School" artists in order to evolve.

But before we can talk to anyone else, we need to be able to talk to each other. We need to subtract the personal from the actual, the money-driven fervor from the legitimate beefs. East vs. West ain't all hype. But it ain't the pervasive monster the media has made it out to be either. Heads just need to marinate, give the next man or woman their due, and get about the common business of surviving in this country. Take this thought to bed with you: East, West, how can you really give a fuck about territory you don't own? Find your mutual ground people, and move on. ⓢ

The Power 30

POWER. THE DICTIONARY DEFINES IT AS "THE POSSESSION OF CONTROL OR COMMAND OVER OTHERS." INDEED, POWER IN THIS GAME, INDUSTRY AND CULTURE IS MOST SPECIFICALLY DEFINED AS THE ABILITY TO AFFECT THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS, VALUES, TASTES AND THE LIKE OF HIP-HOP'S LEGION OF AFICIONADOS. HERE, FOR THE '96, IS THE SOURCE'S FIRST ANNUAL TALLY OF THE TRULY POWERFUL.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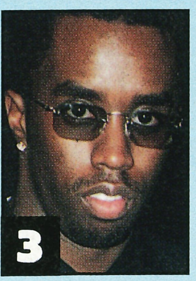
Suge Knight, CEO of Death Row Records
As Chief and Only Big Willie of the label that features such heavyweights as Snoop Dogg, Tha Dogg Pound and the late Tupac Shakur, it seems that everything that Suge touches turns to gold—better yet, platinum. Flexin' his financial (and some say physical) muscle in order to make shit happen, Suge embodies personal power like few in the game. Put it this way, would you ignore his phone call?

2

Russell Simmons & Lyor Cohen, CEO & President of Def Jam
Although non-industry heads perceive Russell as *the* big cheese at Def Jam, the real props for the success of the label that has blessed us with giants like Public Enemy and LL Cool J should be distributed between Russell and his less in-the-spotlight point man, Lyor Cohen. This twosome has built Def Jam into an urban music powerhouse, and now with reach into the fashion and film industries, the growth is still taking place.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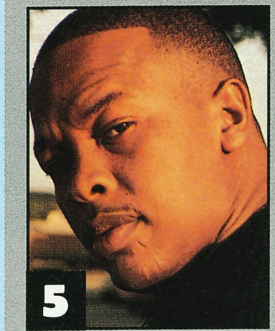
Sean "Puffy" Combs, CEO of Bad Boy Entertainment
Much to the chagrin of many of his more envious peers, Puff Daddy's omnipresent murmuring voice as heard and seen through numerous cameo appearances on songs, remixes and videos, hasn't changed the fact that, after all is said and done, he remains *the* mastermind behind the success of the oft-imitated, never duplicated, Bad Boy Entertainment family. And love it or hate it, Bad Boy's (hence Puffy's) music and fashion aesthetic put trend-driven heads in a chokehold like no one else. *I thought I told you that we won't stop.*

4

Bryan Turner, President/CEO of Priority Records
The floor in Bryan Turner's office must be tiled in precious metal because as the "power that be" at the label responsible for Ice Cube's endeavors, with and without the Westside Connection, as well as distribution of Roc-A-Fella, No Limit and Boot Camp product, he most definitely has enough gold and platinum to go around. And get this: Priority's newly inked deal with EMI should only increase their ability to put tight product out for self, or distribute other explosive independent situations. *You know the drill, so Bow Down!*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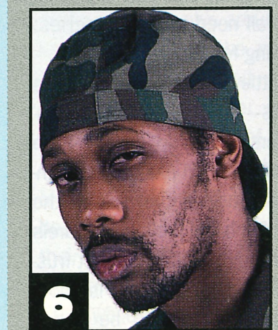
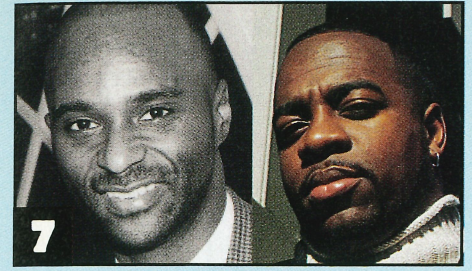
Dr. Dre, CEO of Aftermath Entertainment
From the days when he provided the rat-a-tat soundtracks for N.W.A's tales of gangstaism to his now classic production on Snoop and company's chronic-laced melodies, Dre has always been about his business, on and off the mixing boards. Heads wondered about his future after he made his break from Death Row, but if history is any indication, the road to Aftermath Entertainment will most definitely be paved with gold.

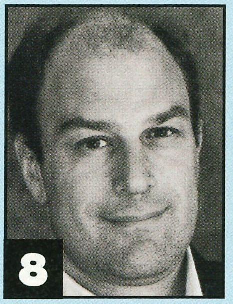

6

RZA
The Wu-Tang saga continues as hip-hop's Shaolin Grandmaster kung-fu chops his way into music history. Besides having more production credits to his name than there are gunfights in a John Woo flick, Rakeem has entered another of the Wu's many chambers, this time as the chief abbot of the Sony-distributed temple known as Razor Sharp Records; oh, let us not forget to mention the Wu Records situation on Priority. *Do yo thang Bobby Steeles, do yo thang.*

#1/MICHAEL O'NEIL–OUTLINE, #2/KWAKU ALSTON–OUTLINE & ERIC RUSS, #3/JAMES MOORE, #5/JAY BLAKESBERG, #6/SUE KWON


7

Keith Paschall & Greg Diggs, Producer & Programming Director, BET
This is how it runs: Diggs gives the green light to run shit and Paschall then delivers the goods with "Rap City," probably today's phattest and most influential outlet for rap videos—a medium that has grown increasingly powerful in its ability to shape perceptions. Together, this tandem has television sets across the country on lockdown every weekday afternoon and once again at midnight.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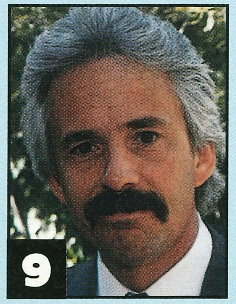
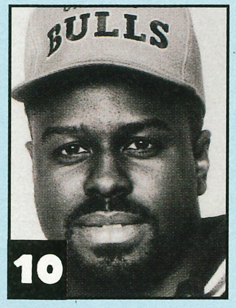
Barry Weiss, President of Jive Records
The roster may be familiar to you—KRS, Tribe, E-40, R. Kelly, etc—but the name probably isn't. Jive has evolved into one of the most efficient of the big indies, and, for the most part, Weiss has been the captain charting that course. With a new KRS lined up for the first quarter—along with current gems by Tribe and E-40—Weiss and co. will be sitting comfortably for some time.

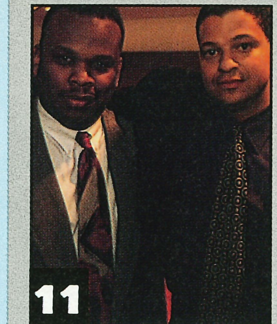

9

Jerry Clifton, consultant to top urban/CHR stations
Once he established his rep in DC, there was no stoppin' this kid as he overcame heavy competition to place himself at the apex of the consulting game. In layman's terms, Jerry does maaad research in order to advise urban stations about what to play and how to play it. Trust us, when he speaks, the country listens.


10

Funkmaster Flex
Where do we start? Funk Flex has been a major source of direct exposure for artists through his numerous ventures: rocking the wheels on his Street Jams show on New York's Hot 97 (with syndication in LA, Japan and London), mad club and party dates across the globe, and his mix-tape-on-CD projects.

#7/ERIC RUSS, #11/ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN, #12/WILLIAM HAMES, #18/ERIC RUSS


11

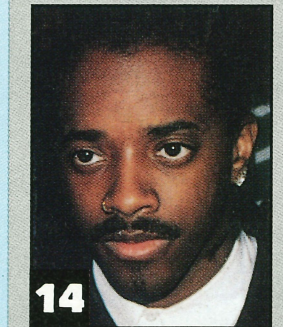
Steve Hegwood & Alfred Liggins, Radio One
Think of three chocolate cities, each with one major radio station that supports hip-hop. If you live in Atlanta (WHTA), Washington, DC (WKYS), or Baltimore (WERQ), you're already up on how Steve Hegwood and Alfred Liggins do their thang as programming director and general manager of this trio of influential stations.

12

Sway & Tech, KMEL/Bay Area & KKBT/L.A.
If you're one of the blessed millions who catches this duo's syndicated show, you know how much these kids mean to hip-hop, creative-wise and business-wise. Reaching an audience that literally spans the US, if Sway and Tech spin it, betcha bottom dollars that it's gonna blow up. *Warning: The following program contains fa-fa-fa-fat beats and music. . .*

13

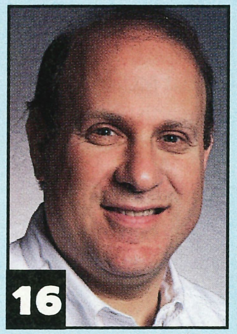
Jimmy Iovine, President of Interscope Records
After goin' head-up with corporate war-machine Time-Warner and emerging virtually unscathed, Jimmy Iovine has implemented a money-earning strategy for distribution of the platinum-heavy Death Row and the newly formed Aftermath Entertainment that has made his and partner Ted Field's label a serious force to be reckoned with in the hip-hop arena.


14

Jermaine Dupri
Years after acquiring his affinity for the spotlight by dancing for Whodini circa 1984 at a Fresh Fest concert in Hotlanta, wunderkind Jermaine Dupri continues to soak up the shine via his production on such chart-topping acts like Kris Kross and Da Brat—not to mention a little gold- and platinum-earning"side project" he calls So So Def Records.

15

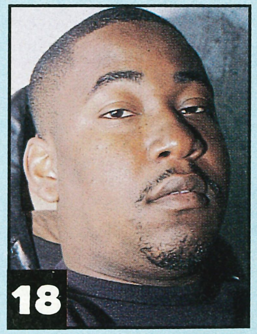
James Smith, CEO of Rap-A-Lot Records
Better known as Lil' Jay, this playa holds the keys to the futures of most hip-hop heads checkin' for that undoubtedly southern hardcore sound. After having the maaad lucrative run with The Geto Boys and later with Scarface, Lil' Jay is expanding his reach and success with a gold debut from Chicago's Do or Die and a hot new release from Boston's Almighty RSO.


16

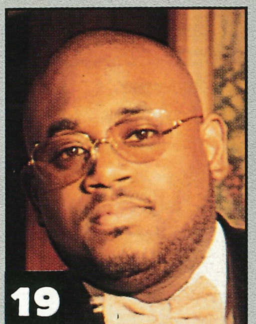
Allen Grunblatt, Senior VP of Relativity Records
Sometimes you can't tell the players without a scorecard, but due to the multi-million Ruthless, Suave House, Bone Thugs (and Mo' Thugs) units pushed in '96, this check-signer's name is not only becoming a household word with industry insiders, it's also synonymous with mega-sales. And as long as the boys from Cleveland are around, that ain't liable to change.

17

Violet Brown, Urban Music Buyer, Wherehouse Entertainment
Although her official title is that of Buyer of Urban Music for the entire Wherehouse music chain, Violet wears mega hats during the course of her day. A true champion of hip-hop, she not only does her thing for her current employers, but also makes moves for self, including serving as A&R and Executive Producer on several projects.

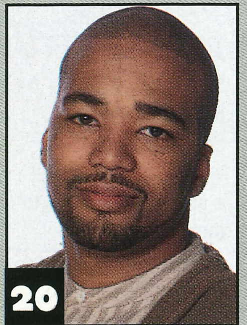

18

Shakim, Flavor Unit
This success story goes back a long time, but Shakim is still goin' strong, holdin' things down as the pilot, navigator and bombardier of The Flavor Unit Management crew. Counting Outkast, Naughty by Nature, Latifah, SWV and Faith, among others within their ranks, Sha and company will undoubtedly expand their territory as the years go by.



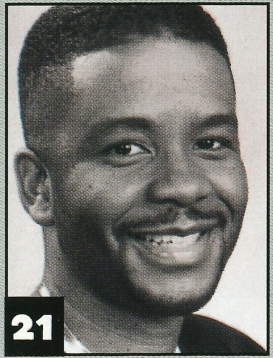
19

Steve Stoute, Trackmasters
Street dreams are made of this: having Nas on your squad is reason enough to sit back and enjoy the finer spoils that hip-hop management brings, but if you were Steve, you'd also have your hands full swinging deals for The Trackmasters. If this ain't enough to keep busy, he also has his "day gig" at Sony where he's the Senior VP of Black Music for Columbia and Epic.



20

Chris Lighty, CEO of Violator Entertainment/RUSH Artist Management
The artist roster in this camp reads like a Hip-Hop All-Star team , with Chris Lighty as the head coach. Managing a bomb line-up that includes MVP's like A Tribe Called Quest and Mobb Deep, and featuring artists like Foxy Brown and Warren G on the label side, not only is Lighty rackin' up the the wins, this cat is holdin' some of the most sought-after talent this sport has ever known.



21

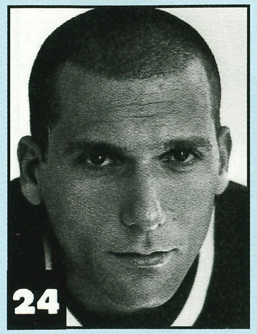
Jay Alan, WEJM/Chicago
This brother is largely responsible for making 106 Jamz in Chicago the place "where Hip-Hop lives." Workin' his magic as the Program Director and Music Director at "We Jamz," Jay has been goin' all out to ensure that the voice of the Now Generation is heard throughout the Chi-town urbs and suburbs.

MTV
22 IC TELEVISION

Sherry Howell & Stephen Hill, MTV Networks
Despite suspicions of an anti-Rap conspiracy runnin' through MTV, the channel continues its reign as *the* premier purveyor of American youth culture, which includes hip-hop music. Much of this is due to the long hours put in by Howell and Hill, the Vice President of Music and Artist Relations and Director of Music Programming, respectively.

HOT 97 FM
WHERE HIP HOP LIVES
23

Steve Smith/ Tracy Cloherty/Judy Ellis, WQHT-Hot 97/New York
As the Director of Programming, Music Director and General Manager, respectively, of the number one urban-music station in the largest radio market in the country, this veritable tri-fecta has a big say in what sounds reach the ears of hip-hop lovers in the NYC metro area. Despite Hot 97's reputation for being hesitant to break new sounds, their influence as trendsetters cannot be understated.

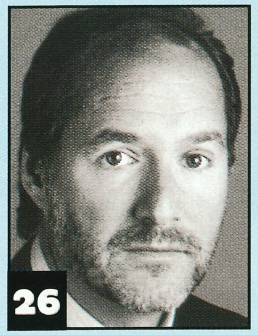


24

Steven Rifkind, President of Loud Records/SRC
Getting his start interning in the mailroom at the family-owned Spring Records, Rifkind went on to found what is now one of the leading street promotion companies in the business. That ultimately lead to the birth of Loud Records, generally considered one of the hottest new indie labels around. After the back to back to back successes of groups like The Alkaholiks, Wu-Tang and Mobb Deep, hip-hop heads far and wide keep a keen ear open for the next wave to hit the streets.

THE BOX
25 USIC TELEVISION
OU CONTROL

Liz Kiley & J.Gibbs, THE BOX
Okay, they give you Music Television that you control, but before you get to dial up which videos and interviews you want to check out, Kiley, Programming Director, and Gibbs, Music Director of THE BOX get to control *how much* of a choice you have. How's that for power?



26

Jerry Ade, President, Famous Artists Agency
Keeping his eyes and ears to the streets is what has made Jerry a major playa in the talent booking game. Settin' off tours for the likes of B.I.G., De La and Goodie Mob, the President of Famous Artists is the man to see when you want to see your favorites doin' their thing around your way.

27

Ricky Leigh, Mix Show Editor, HITS Magazine
Besides being the Mix Show Editor at HITS magazine, a leading weekly music industry trade publication, Ricky also coordinates a weekly conference call during which mix show DJ's across the map relay info about what's hot and what's not in their respective markets. All industry hopefuls take note: if Ricky and company get behind a record, start counting the revenue.

28 **Alan Hayman, Hayman Entertainment, Inc.**
A list on power-players wouldn't be complete without this gentleman. The name may not be at all familiar to the masses, but those who *know*. . .know. Hayman has been a key mover and shaker in the the promotion arena for quite some time. In short, if you're a label-owner or a manager who's tryin' to get your artist to the commonfolk, you'd be well advised to give this cat a call.

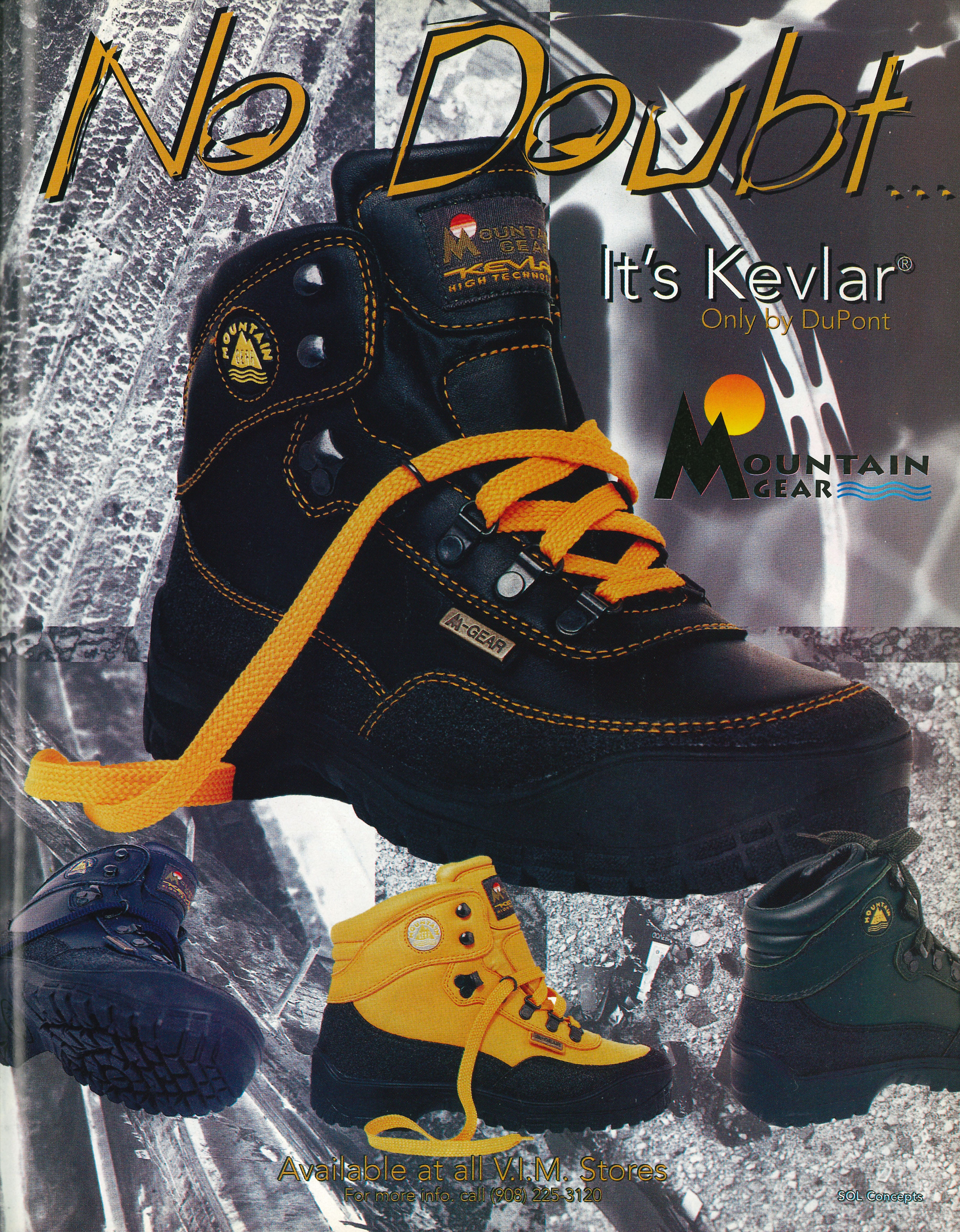
29

Kathy Dosdall, Musicland Group
Twenty-five years deep in the game, Dosdall is responsible for what products get to over 1,000 shops across the country as the buyer of all full-length R&B/Hip-Hop for the Musicland chain, which includes Sam Goody, Media Play, and the small-town On Cue stores. The math is quite simple: if it ain't in the stores, nobody's buying it.

30

Cara Lewis, William Morris
Anyone writing a book on rap history should definitely call on Cara. Although very few individuals outside of the primary power circles know this, her career as a booking agent for William Morris has crossed paths with hip-hop legends far and wide, including Public Enemy, Ice T and countless others. As we head for the new millenium, she continues to be a key playa in the tour game [note: live shows, this is where you can *really* make money].

#20/ANTHONY BARBOZA, #22/EVERETT COLLECTION.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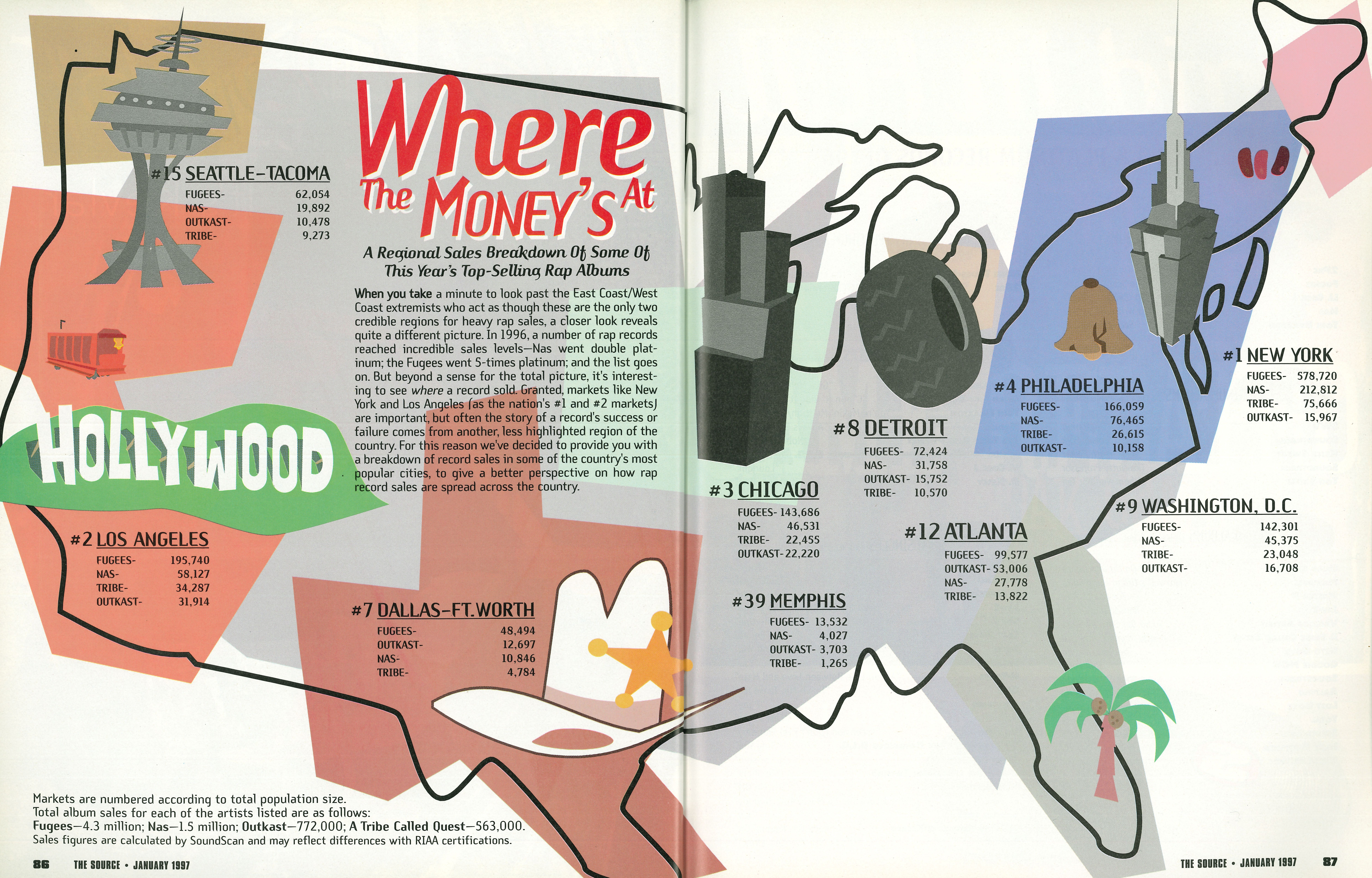
Where The MONEY'S At

A Regional Sales Breakdown Of Some Of This Year's Top-Selling Rap Albums

When you take a minute to look past the East Coast/West Coast extremists who act as though these are the only two credible regions for heavy rap sales, a closer look reveals quite a different picture. In 1996, a number of rap records reached incredible sales levels—Nas went double platinum; the Fugees went 5-times platinum; and the list goes on. But beyond a sense for the total picture, it's interesting to see *where* a record sold. Granted, markets like New York and Los Angeles (as the nation's #1 and #2 markets) are important, but often the story of a record's success or failure comes from another, less highlighted region of the country. For this reason we've decided to provide you with a breakdown of record sales in some of the country's most popular cities, to give a better perspective on how rap record sales are spread across the country.



#15 SEATTLE-TACOMA

FUGEES-	62,054
NAS-	19,892
OUTKAST-	10,478
TRIBE-	9,273

#2 LOS ANGELES

FUGEES-	195,740
NAS-	58,127
TRIBE-	34,287
OUTKAST-	31,914

#7 DALLAS-FT.WORTH

FUGEES-	48,494
OUTKAST-	12,697
NAS-	10,846
TRIBE-	4,784

#3 CHICAGO

FUGEES-	143,686
NAS-	46,531
TRIBE-	22,455
OUTKAST-	22,220

#39 MEMPHIS

FUGEES-	13,532
NAS-	4,027
OUTKAST-	3,703
TRIBE-	1,265

#8 DETROIT

FUGEES-	72,424
NAS-	31,758
OUTKAST-	15,752
TRIBE-	10,570

#12 ATLANTA

FUGEES-	99,577
OUTKAST-	53,006
NAS-	27,778
TRIBE-	13,822

#4 PHILADELPHIA

FUGEES-	166,059
NAS-	76,465
TRIBE-	26,615
OUTKAST-	10,158

#1 NEW YORK

FUGEES-	578,720
NAS-	212,812
TRIBE-	75,666
OUTKAST-	15,967

#9 WASHINGTON, D.C.

FUGEES-	142,301
NAS-	45,375
TRIBE-	23,048
OUTKAST-	16,708

Markets are numbered according to total population size.
Total album sales for each of the artists listed are as follows:
Fugees—4.3 million; **Nas**—1.5 million; **Outkast**—772,000; **A Tribe Called Quest**—563,000.
Sales figures are calculated by SoundScan and may reflect differences with RIAA certifications.

Paid In Full

THE GOLD & PLATINUM RECORDS OF '96

MULTI-PLATINUM ALBUMS

2Pac	*All Eyez On Me* [6 MILLION]
Fugees	*The Score* [5 MILLION]
LL Cool J	*Mr. Smith* [2 MILLION]
Nas	*It Was Written* [2 MILLION]
Toni Braxton	*Secrets* [2 MILLION]

PLATINUM ALBUMS [at least 1 million copies sold]

SWV	*New Beginning*
Soundtrack	*Sunset Park*
Keith Sweat	*Keith Sweat*
Soundtrack	*The Nutty Professor*
Too Short	*Album Number Ten*

GOLD ALBUMS [at least 500,000 copies sold]

Quad City DJs	*Get On Up and Dance*
Maxwell	*Maxwell's Urban Hang Suite*
Master P	*Ice Cream Man*
Jay-Z	*Reasonable Doubt*
Various Artists	*So So Def Bass All Stars*
A Tribe Called Quest	*Beats, Rhymes, and Life*
Geto Boys	*The Resurrection*
Goodie MOB	*Soul Food*
Soundtrack	*High School High*
Aaliyah	*One in a Million*
Lost Boyz	*Legal Drug Money*
Total	*Total*
Soundtrack	*A Thin Line Between Love & Hate*
Isley Brothers	*Mission to Please*
Busta Rhymes	*The Coming*

MULTI-PLATINUM SINGLES

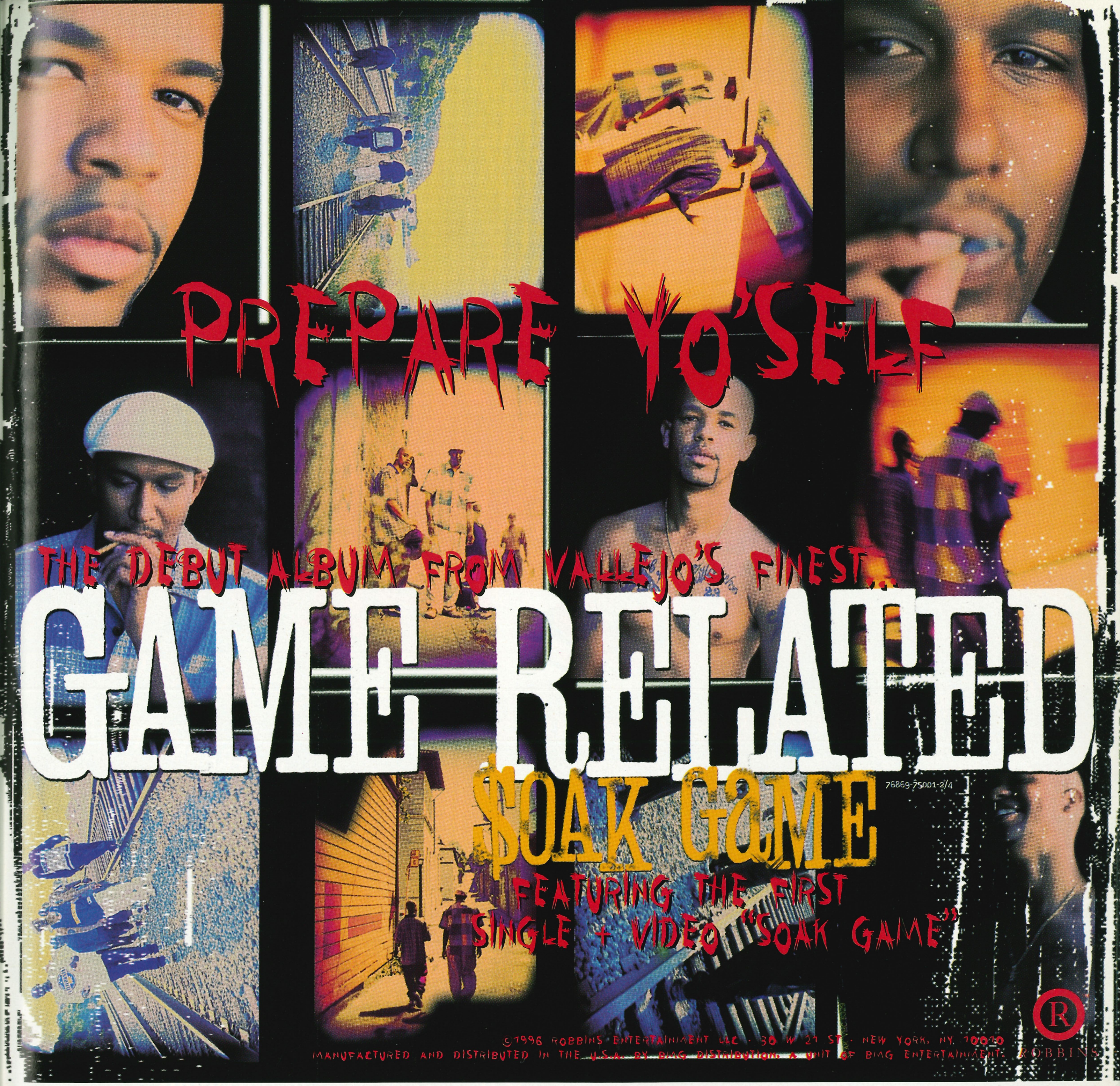
Bone Thugs-N-Harmony	"Tha Crossroads" [2 MILLION]
2Pac	"How Do U Want It/California Love" [2 MILLION]

PLATINUM SINGLES [at least 1 million copies sold]

Tracy Chapman	"Give Me One Reason"
Quad City DJs	"C'mon N' Ride It (The Train)"
Toni Braxton	"You're Makin' Me High/Let It Flow"
Mariah Carey	"Always Be My Baby"
The Tony Rich Project	"Nobody Knows"
Junior MAFIA featuring the Notorious B.I.G.	"Get Money"
LL Cool J	"Loungin"
R. Kelly	"I Can't Sleep (If I)"

GOLD SINGLES [at least 500,000 copies sold]

OutKast	"Elevators"
D'Angelo	"Lady"
Jay-Z	"Dead Presidents/Ain't No Nigga"
SWV	"You're the One"
Lost Boyz	"Renee"
Total	"Kissing You"
Monifah	"You"
H-Town	"A Thin Line Between Love and Hate"
Case	"Touch Me, Tease Me"
Ginuwine	"Pony"
Az Yet	"Last Night"
Maxwell	"Ascension (Don't Ever Wonder)"
112 featuring the Notorious B.I.G.	"Only You"
Keith Sweat	"Twisted"
Do or Die (featuring Twista)	"Po' Pimp"
New Edition	"Hit Me Off"
Monica	"Why I Love You So Much/Ain't Nobody"
Crucial Conflict	"Hay"
MC Lyte featuring Xscape	"Keep On, Keepin' On"
Coolio	"It's All the Way Live (Now)"



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ADVENTURES OF STEVIE V DIRTY CASH • LIL LOUIS FRENCH KISS
THE OUTHERE BROTHERS BOOM BOOM BOOM • WHODINI FREAKS COME OUT AT NIGHT
2 IN A ROOM WIGGLE IT • H-TOWN KNOCKIN' DA BOOTS
SAMANTHA FOX TOUCH ME (I WANT YOUR BODY) • WRECKX-N-EFFECT RUMP SHAKER
2 LIVE CREW ME SO HORNY • TONE LŌC WILD THING • LABELLE LADY MARMALADE
B.T. EXPRESS DO IT ('TIL YOU'RE SATISFIED) • CLARENCE CARTER STROKIN'

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RICK JAMES
COMMODORES
ADVENTURES OF STEVIE V
LIL LOUIS
THE OUTHERE BROTHERS
WHODINI
2 IN A ROOM
HOT SONGS FOR SEXY DANCERS
STRIP JOINTZ
16 BIG BEAUTIFUL HITS
H-TOWN
SAMANTHA FOX
WRECKX-N-EFFECT
2 LIVE CREW
TONE LŌC
LABELLE
B.T. EXPRESS
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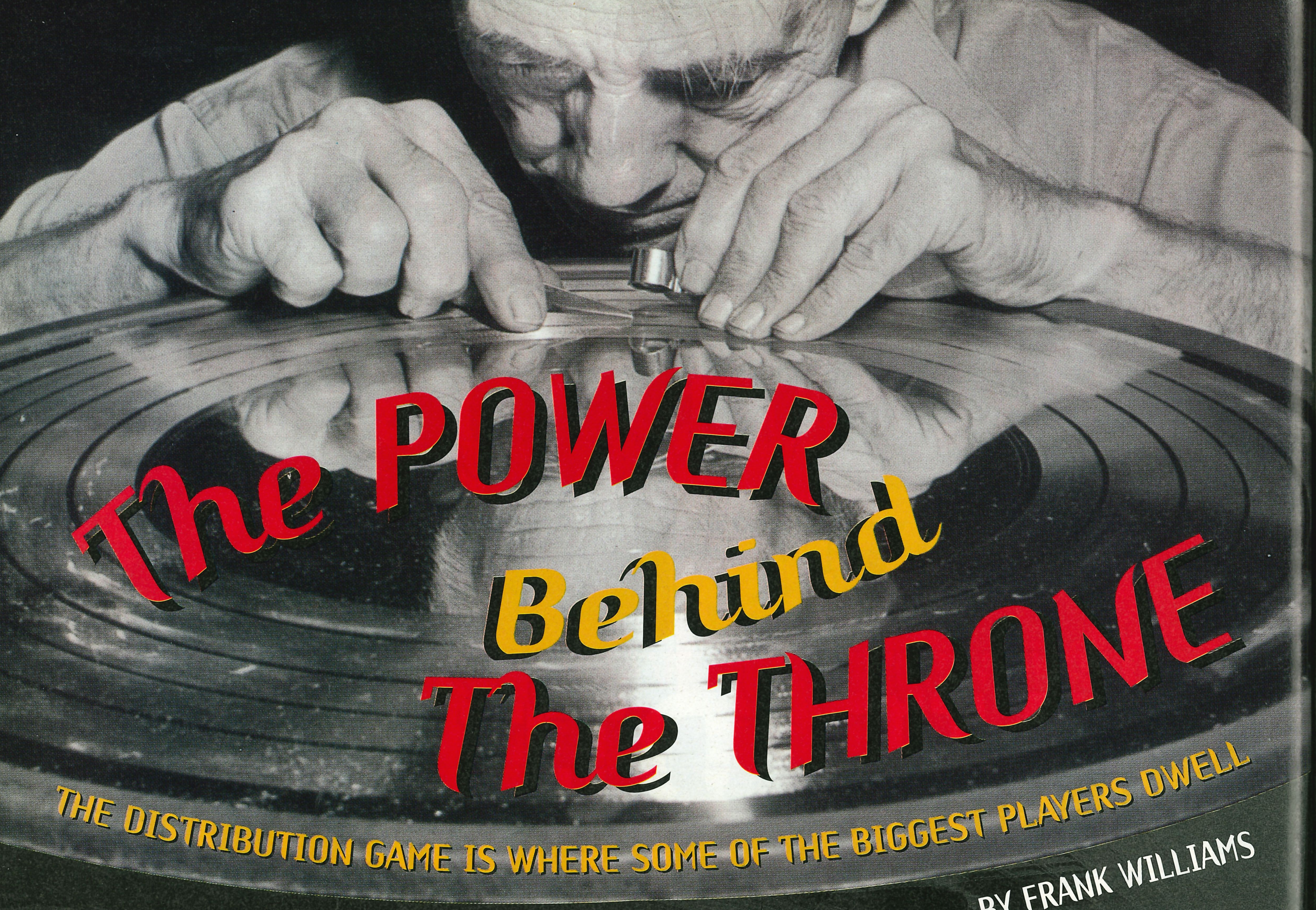


The POWER Behind The THRONE

THE DISTRIBUTION GAME IS WHERE SOME OF THE BIGGEST PLAYERS DWELL

BY FRANK WILLIAMS

Who's really getting paid in hip-hop?

You say it's the record company pulling in all the **dollars**? Wrong, playa. Check the math in the long run equation and you'll find that there is a surprise Big Willie in the music business.

More important for an MC than how **dope** you are, whether critics dig your album, or if the marketing department put together the **best package**, is getting your CD in the right record stores so you can get paid.

If your crew is lucky enough to score with a **hit record**, you won't garner the potential skyrocketing sales if the stores have no **access** to your product.

COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERU KUWAYAMA • ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS-BROWN BROTHERS

So although the record company is an important part of the chain, the distributor is the most crucial link between the label and the retail stores. They are the people who actually get your CD from the manufacturer to Sam Goody or The Wherehouse (regional record store chains). They do much of the necessary housekeeping work to make sure everybody receives their proper cash. Or as Al Bell, the founder of Los Angeles based record distributor Bellmark Records, says, "Distribution is billing, sales and collection." Simply put, distribution is probably the most underrated yet important cog in the machinery of the music industry.

That means that although much hyped music moguls like Arista's Clive Davis may be publicized as the people making the most money off the hard work of artists, it's often the less glamorous and overlooked distributor who is really smiling all the way to the bank.

"Our job as a distributor is to get the product made by independent labels out to the retail outlets where it can be purchased by the customers," says Robin Cohn, whose Bay Area label City Hall Records has had huge success after distributing early records by MC Hammer, Too Short and E-40. "I guess we are like a baseball farm team. Before an artist has a huge amount of following and demand, we work their records on a regional level. The bigger labels watch what's moving in the stores and judge who they are going to sign a distribution deal with based on who's moving units."

Acknowledging that all deals are set up differently, Cohn gave an example of how the profits from a $16 CD might be broken down. When the disc is sold to the consumer, $8 goes back to the record label. This is the pot of money that the artist is paid out of, depending on how many royalty points they have in their record sales. The store then keeps about $6 for itself and the last $2 is the distributor's profit.

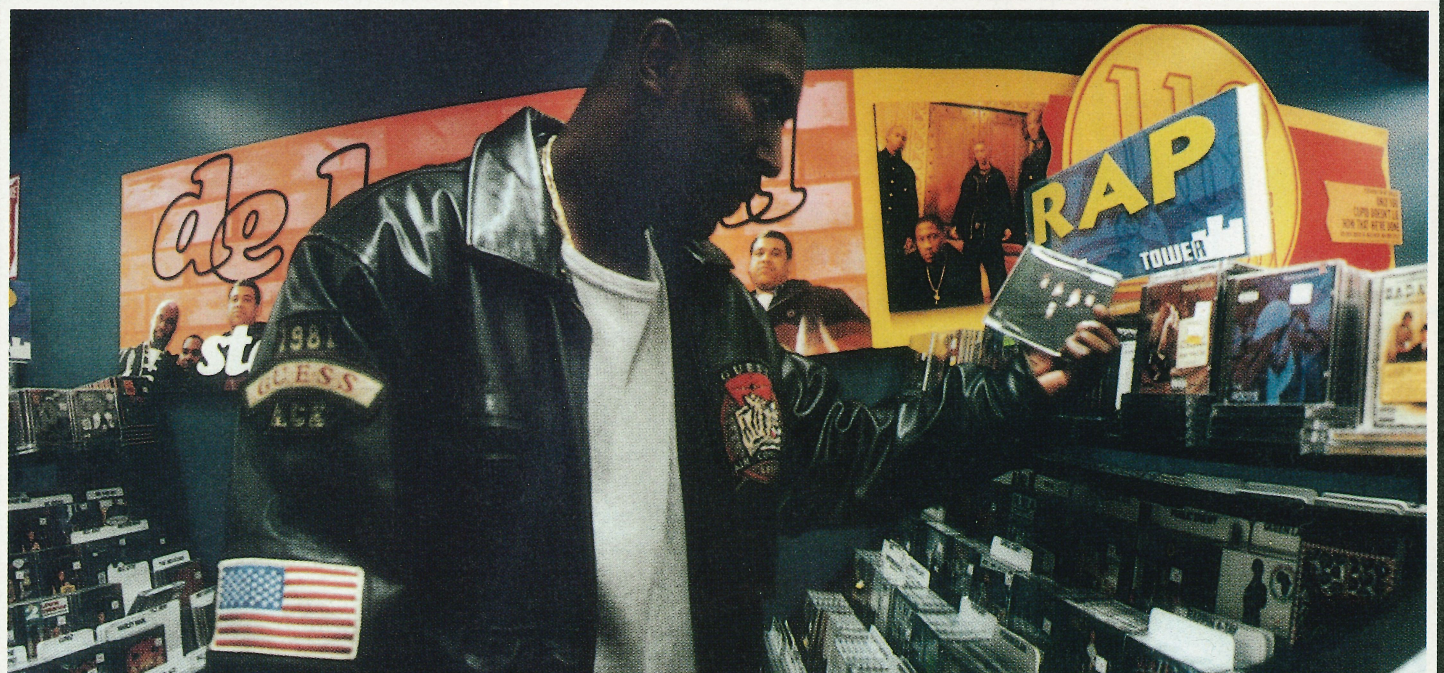
A deal like that obviously pays the record company the most on each individual disc that's sold, but the distributor could win in the final analysis. Think about it: major labels usually can only release a few albums a year because they invest time and money in A&R direction, promotion and other artist development related items. Yet distributors can make money off dozens, maybe hundreds of albums a year, because their job is simply to get the album in the store.

Take City Hall Records for example. The small label Cohn co-founded back when "the Sugar Hill Gang was popular," not only makes paper off hardcore rap, they also distributed pop singer Angelina's first album. They also handled regional distribution duties for another pop singer named Buffy, and distributed a quirky Christmas album of meowing cats called *Meowy Christmas*. The album, which sold more 200,000 units, is the work of Los Angeles producer Mike Spalla, who herded the cats in his studio and recorded their various sounds.

Also a big plus for being a distributor like Cohn

Hip Hop
cid Jazz

Above: New music sampling stations at retail outlets have revolutionized the industry. **Below:** Despite a great song, dope video, and local props, it means nothing if your disc isn't in stores.

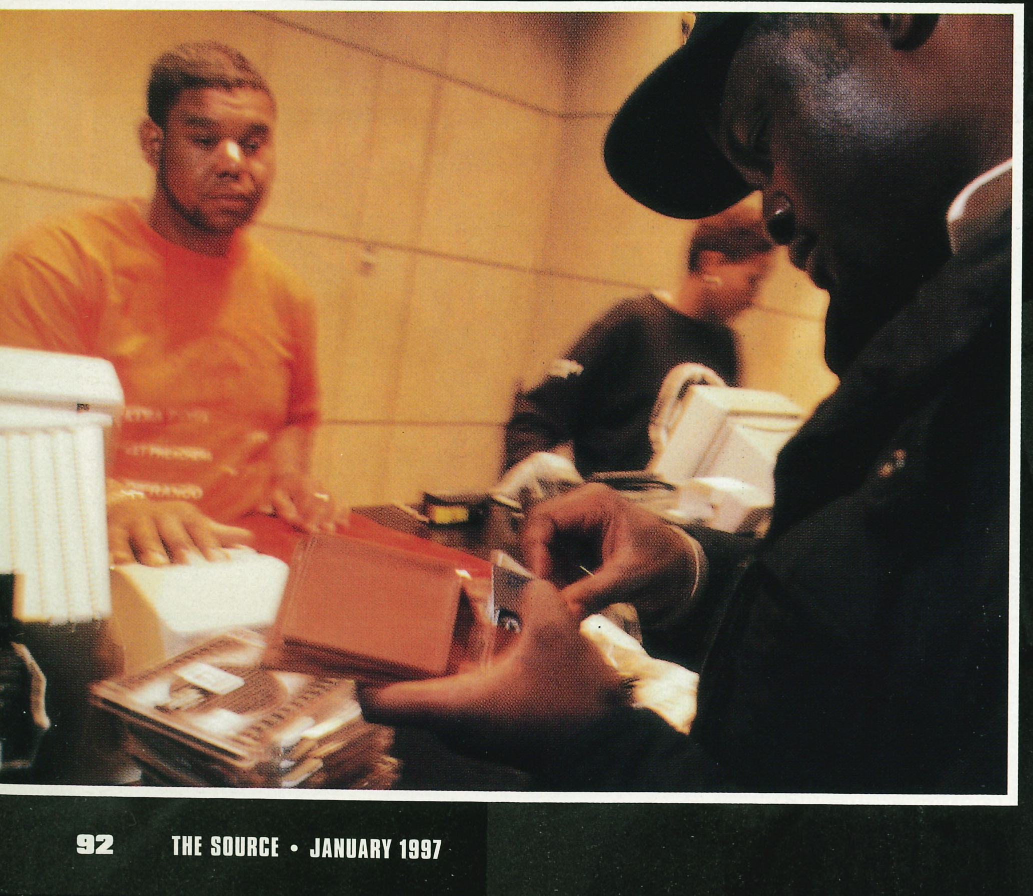


is that there is little of the label office politics or frequent losses from albums that don't sell. They get paid every time a record they distribute sells. Basically they sit back and wait for their money. Most albums released by major record labels like Warner Brothers, Arista, Jive or Columbia are put out by in-house distribution services. Others sign deals with distributors like Uni. But Bell says that these more well-known labels often don't want to spend their time dealing with regional chains of retail outlets and small "Mom and Pop" record stores; and the big boys' neglect of this market in recent years has allowed some smaller distributors like his Bellmark Records and Cohn's City Hall Records to flourish.

BENEFITS AND DOWNFALLS OF A SMALL DISTRIBUTOR

A smaller distributor can sometimes offer an independent label like Luther Campbell's Luke Records or E-40's Sick Wid It a larger cut of the total profits for album sales because it's just the label and the distributor sharing money with the record store. Cohn says some independent labels could get as much as $5 profit back on an album when they worked with him. "People know they will get paid by us if the record sells," he says. "There is no worry about all the extra costs." But Cohn admits a deal with a smaller distributor like his could limit a record with the potential to sell 5 million copies nationally to only strong regional sales. Take for instance if the Fugees only had Ruffhouse Records and a small distributor behind them. Would they have been able to sell so many records without the fat pockets and national exposure provided by Sony, who distributed and marketed their album? Cohn also says major labels can generally deliver more radio play, since they have "more pull with radio stations."

Distributors like **City Hall** and **Bellmark** can provide more of a family atmosphere and allow the artists to get involved in the process of promoting their own albums.



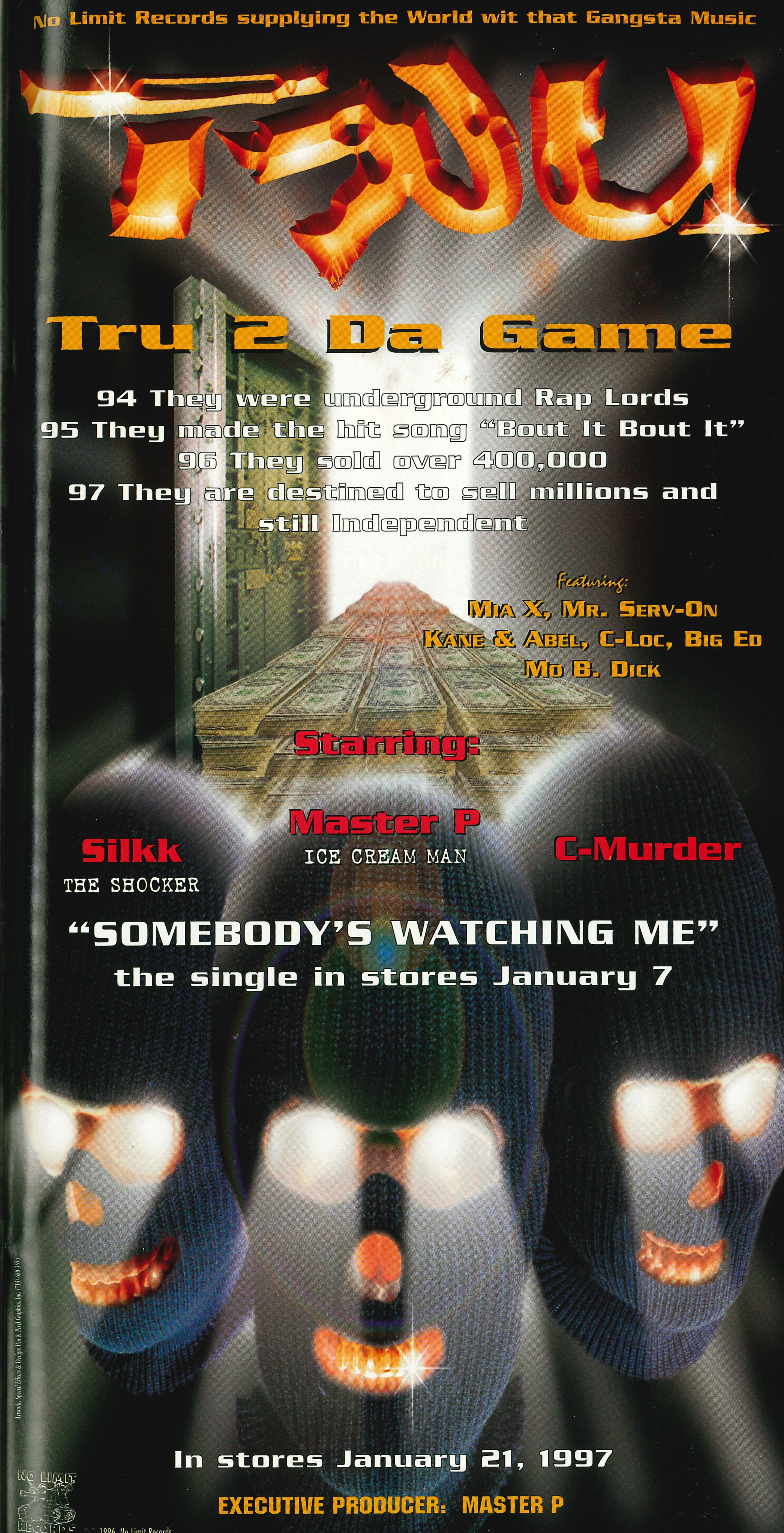
Since smaller distributors are better at saturating a small market, they know how to sell a E-40 record to a Bay Area fan base or how to push a Luke record down South. A larger label, whose is goal is national exposure, has less knowledge of specialized markets. Distributors like City Hall and Bellmark can also provide more of a family atmosphere and allow the artists to get involved in the process of promoting their own albums. Cohn said when City Hall Records distributed Hammer's "Ring Em," his Vice President of Purchasing and Marketing for Dance and Rap, Walter Zelnick, sat down with the rapper and discussed marketing techniques. Zelnick says an artist getting involved in his own project is integral to the album's commercial success or failure, no matter what size distributor they are signed to.

"Hammer was always on the phone with the record stores trying to make it happen," Zelnick remembers. "He was the best self-promoter. That's what you have to do to get the album out there. Check on sales yourself. You have to put work into your own project."

Both men agreed that when they work with artists who dedicate themselves actively to pushing their own stuff, the results are almost always more album sales. And rappers like E-40, Too Short or Eazy E, who sold tapes out of the trunks of their cars, win much needed respect from future major distributors who admire the drive and business savvy of the artists.

"Somedays I don't want to go to work," says Cohn. "If we happen to be dealing with records that are doing well then this is an easy job. But if they are not hot, then it's a much harder job." Cohn says when an album is selling units, local record stores need to replenish their supply of an album that's selling out, and instead of reordering from the label, they use a resource called a "One Stop."

"A One Stop is another type of wholesale outlet," says Cohn. "Retailers shop there. They stock all the albums you usually need. It's a place to get all your hits in one place. Instead of buying from



No Limit Records supplying the World wit that Gangsta Music

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96 They sold over 400,000
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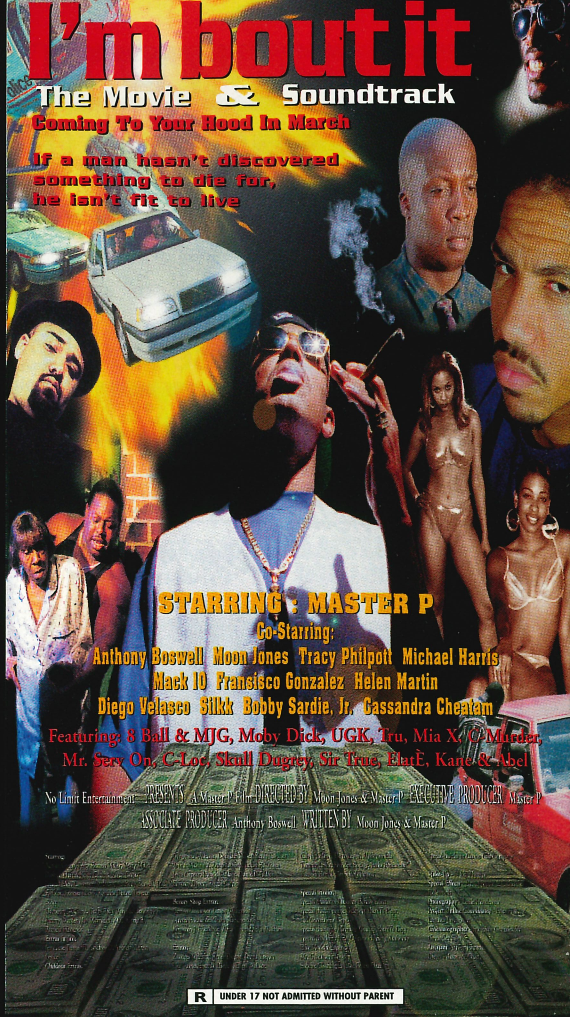

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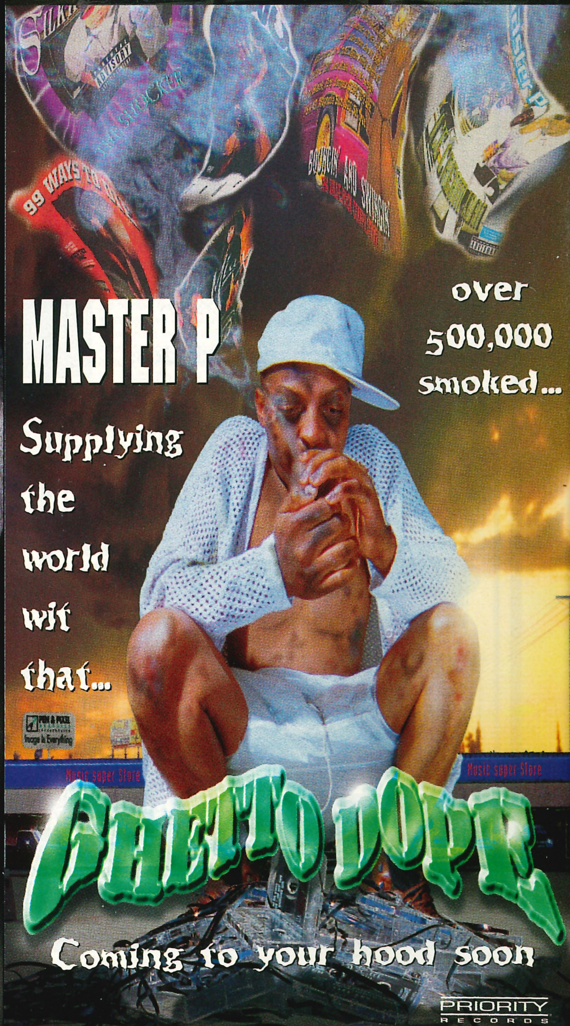

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Making The Donuts: A worker shown at the most crucial moment of an artist's career, shipping the product.

the majors, you get it all there."

With so many rappers out there now, being able to differentiate or make your album a hit is all about the right advertising. "It's so competitive out there now that it boggles my mind. Marketing and promotion are more important than they have ever been for rap records. The label has to be aggressive about it's marketing techniques."

And rappers with regional notoriety, like Vallejo's Mac Dre, insist that selling 100,000 records with a small distributor like City Hall may be more profitable for a local artist then moving 500,000 units with a major label.

"It can help in the short term and hurt in the long run," says the 26-year-old rapper. "City Hall knows where the records should be placed in the record stores up here in the Bay. And for me I like to keep it as small as possible, more family oriented. It could also hurt you in the long run because a national reputation and sales is what you really want in the music game."

Mac Dre's Vallejo crew, Young Black Brother Records, is an example of how to make the distribution game work and still keep your own independence. Once rappers like Ray Luv and Young Lay started becoming popular in the Bay Area, Atlantic Records signed the label, headed by Khayree Shaheed, to a distribution deal based on the high volume of albums they were selling with a small distributor.

"The real question is, 'What is your goal?'," says Bell in reference to starting your own label instead of waiting on a major to sign you. "Entrepreneurs get more attention and keep control over their business with their own label and distribution. They should read everything out there so they can learn about the whole process of making a record."

MAKING DISTRIBUTION WORK FOR YOU

Occasionally a small distributor can promote and market an album and make it a national hit. Cohn promoted The Click's *Down and Dirty* album nationally (which eventually sold more thatn 150,000 copies); and though his resources were far more scarce than say an MCA or Columbia, Bell used his hookups with a network of national independent distributors to bypass a major deal and blow up Tag Team's hit, "Whoomp There It Is."

Many popular singers and rap stars complain that Black artists are the only ones being exploited by the record labels, but perhaps they should spend more of their profits on starting their own distribution companies instead of buying six cars and big ass houses. Follow the cash trail when it comes to understanding how your record is made and then distributed. MC's should know more than just what time to show up at the studio.

The best advice in making the distribution game work for you comes from Bell's 35 years of experience, from his days spent with the Memphis-based Stax Records. According to Bell, his new Black-owned distribution and record company, Bellmark Records, which distributed Prince's "Most Beautiful Girl in The World," is doing well because he realized the real power wasn't just in singing or rapping, but in controlling and overseeing the whole project. "Most artists in general don't understand how it works," maintains Bell. "It's a tragedy and has been that way since the beginning of time. You should know how to do everything from marketing to sales to promoting your album. Because what's shipped is not what you get paid for. You only get paid for what sells."

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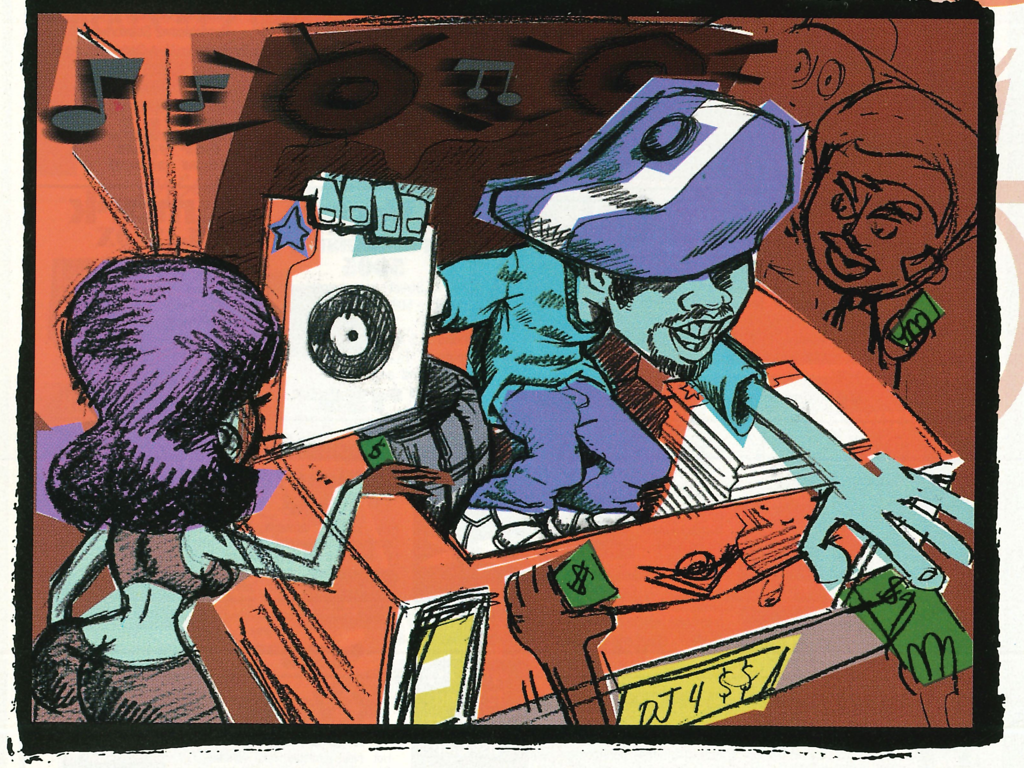
Set It Off



HOW TO ENTER THE GAME WHEN NO ONE WANTS TO PLAY WITH YOU

By Tonya Payton

We all have dreams, aspirations and goals... things that we dream of but for whatever reason don't follow through on. For many of us, that dream is getting into the recording industry. So before you just dive with reckless abandon into the murky waters of the biz, here are some steps that might make the going a bit easier.

Knowledge: Go to the library and do your homework. This will give you a basic knowledge of the day-to-day operations of an independent label. It's also very important that you do an internship at an independent label (a minimum of 6 months). Make contacts, ask questions and take notes. It is important that you are able to experience, first-hand, the struggles you will inevitably face.

Business plan: As in starting any business, you must have a plan. You need a 5-year business plan that includes a projected budget. Your business plan should reflect you. You're the one who has to live by it.

Cash: You should have at least $5,000 in the stash. If you don't have that type of cash on reserve, then make a visit to your local bank and apply for a small business loan. Present your 5-year business plan, along with your projected budget and your W-2 document. If you have never applied for a loan, then you will probably need a co-signer. You cannot start and operate a label without money.

Legal Counsel: Find yourself a good business lawyer to assist with contracts and the like.

Operating a business: Now you must establish yourself as a business. An incorporation license is always the best route to take, but keep in mind Uncle Sam will be knocking at your door at the end of each tax season to collect that $365 minimum owed by each Corporation (depending on the amount of money the company grosses for the year, it could be much more).

Communication: Getting your office started. Whether it's out of your momma's basement, from your bedroom, or an office overlooking Central Park, you absolutely must have a directory-listed telephone line and a fax machine designated strictly for your label.

Artist: Make sure that the artist you choose to represent your company is marketable. Your artist must be both talented and serious about his or her career. You're going up against major record labels so your artist better come correct. Attend talent shows, ask friends, and just generally put the word out on the street. Once you've decided on the artist *you* want to work with, you need to enter into a written contractual agreement. Make sure the terms of the contract (drafted by your lawyer) are very clear.

Production: If you don't have a producer that you're feelin', then follow the same procedure that you did in locating your artist. To eliminate excessive studio time and money, your artist should study and rehearse the vocal arrangements until they have it down tight. When in pre-production, utilize a pre-production studio with good acoustics and up-to-date equipment. Now that you have a good solid track, upgrade to a facility that can give you a good mix-down and master.

Manufacturing & Distribution: Because you are dealing with a limited budget, start looking for a company that can offer you a package deal. Select a realistic release date... and then stick to it.

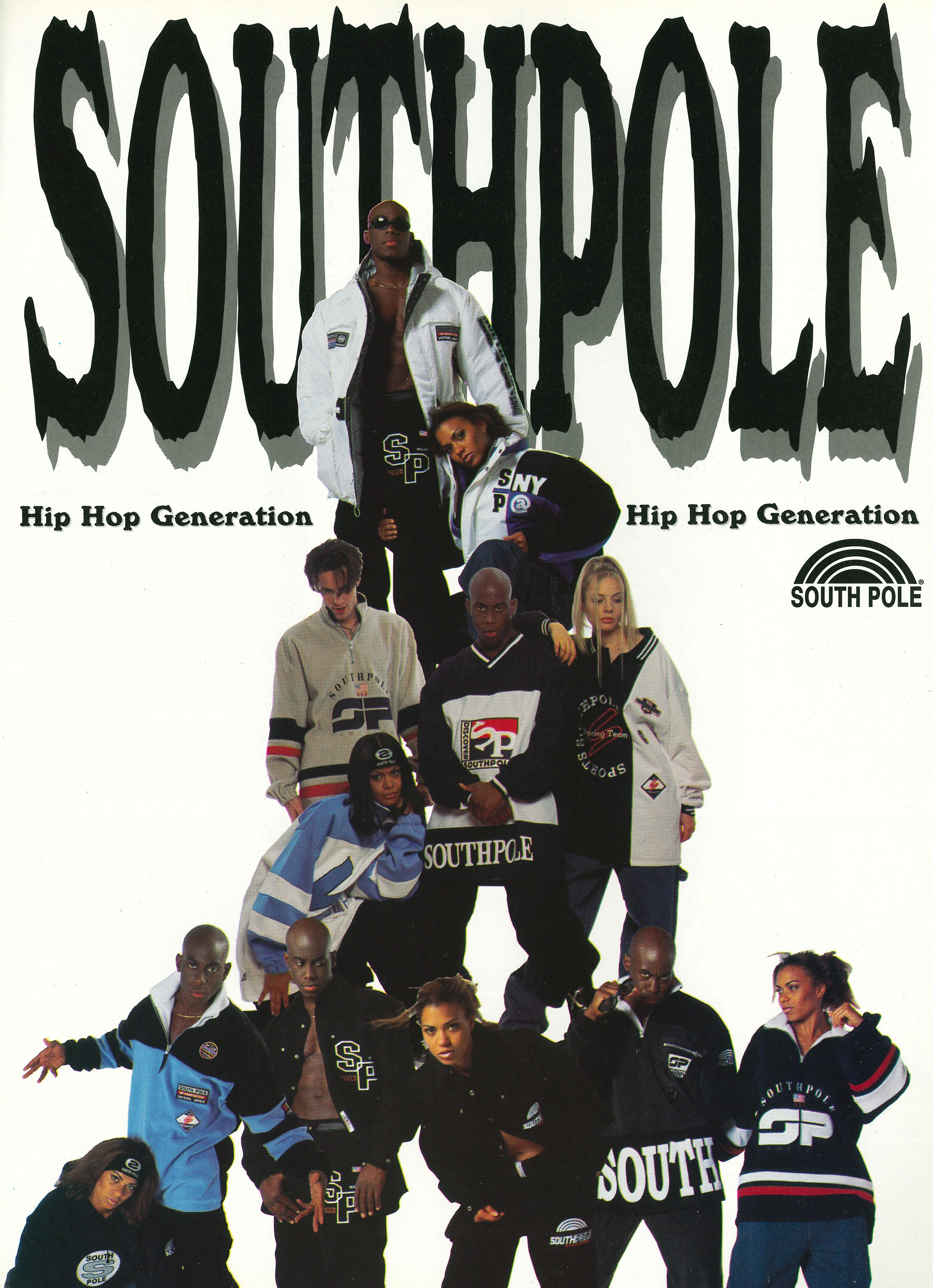
Promotion: Choose a geographical region and saturate it. Many labels start with their home city. Pre-promotion (promotions done prior to the date of release) is very important. Visit the clubs in your region and hit off the DJs with vinyl (12" inch). Find out how your artist can perform promotional shows at these venues. Find the most reputable record pool in your area, call them up, and then service the pool with your product. Get a listing of radio stations and their formats locally, as well as in surrounding areas. Call up and find out if they use CDs or vinyl, and service them. Find out the names of program and music directors and write a letter of introduction. Follow up!

Write a press release (if you don't know how to, go to the library and find a sample press release). Send a copy of the release, your artist's bio and photograph, and sample product to your local newspapers and magazines. Follow up!

Print up post cards with your record label logo, the name of your artist, their photo and the release date (make sure that your product is in retail stores on that date). That postcard should be everywhere. On countertops in stores, at bus stops, reception areas of beauty/barber salons, restaurants, in mailboxes, nightclubs... anywhere people will see it.

Now you're on your way. But remember, it's gonna take, as Outkast says, "me and you, your momma and your cousin too" to get the job done. "SET IT OFF!" Ⓢ

TODD JAMES



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It all adds Up

IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX, OFTEN HOSTILE, MARKETPLACE, MANY RAPPERS ARE REFINING THEIR PORTFOLIO BY PURSUING ENDORSEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Is that Queen Latifah's face peeking through a box of cereal in the Frosted Cheerios commercial? Is that LL Cool J rapping the 75-year-old song "Take Me Out To The Ball Game" for a Major League Baseball campaign? Is that Method Man on a billboard in full Reebok gear claiming, "This Is My Planet?" Yes... on all accounts.

Few could have predicted that any non-Hammer, non-Kid-N-Play palatable types would be able to pitch products to mainstream America. Let's face it, we're living in a time when most Americans perceive hip-hop music as an angst-filled, crime-related entity. And traditionally, only Black entertainers of the James Earl Jones/Lena Horne league were approached with the opportunity to endorse products of the non-alcoholic or non-tobacco variety.

But it's noticeable that recently, several young African-American advertising representatives have set out to uplift the image of hip-hop and its artists to a more positive light. Darryl Cobbin, Sprite's senior brand manager of five years, is a hard-core, hip-hop fanatic who is helping rap artists, like many professional athletes, realize their full endorsement potential. "When selecting an artist," says Cobbin, "the desired effect is to find one who best represents hip-hop's art form for commercials, while keeping it true."

He adds that "first, the strategies and positioning of the brand must be flushed out, then we can find which artist can best convey this message. We're not like other companies who find any kid to rap just to get a younger audience."

Nike public relations manager Eric Patton, responsible for the KRS-One revolution commercial, also presents true hip-hop in the shoe company's advertising. "Our objective is to present the authenticity of cultural nuances to our market," he says. "Music and sports have always had a marriage between the two. And since urban appeal equates to mass appeal, we're able to bridge the two with people (artists and ad consultants), who are not just into hip-hop, but part of it."

The growing number of MCs endorsing products is a smart move, financially and otherwise. For too long, rappers have boasted in their lyrics about name-brand clothing, alcoholic beverages, shoes and cologne, benefiting companies such as Bally, Tommy Hilfiger, Versace, Cool Water and Olde English. Endorsements allow rappers to capitalize on their own market value, while shattering the uni-dimensional, pseudo-hard perception that says that mic wielders can't be pitchmen. Just pray that we don't see a corny commercial featuring the Ol' Dirty Bastard battling Cavity Creeps over the new Crest Gel toothpaste.

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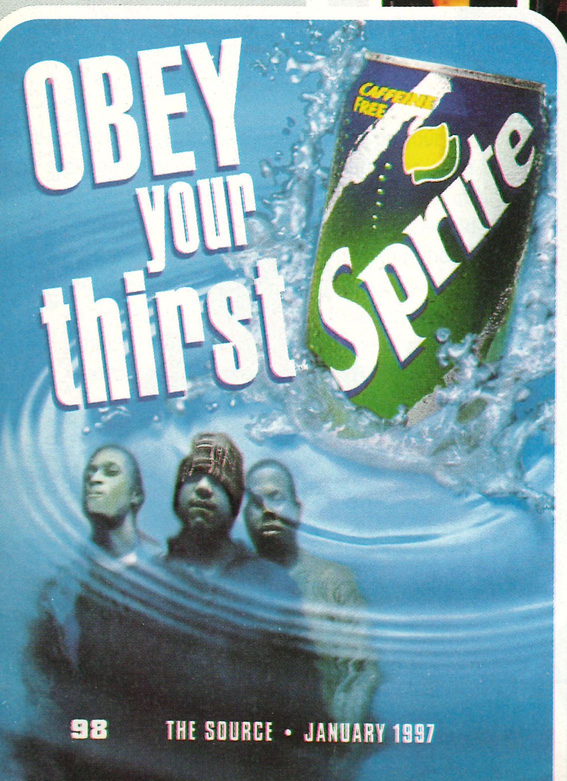

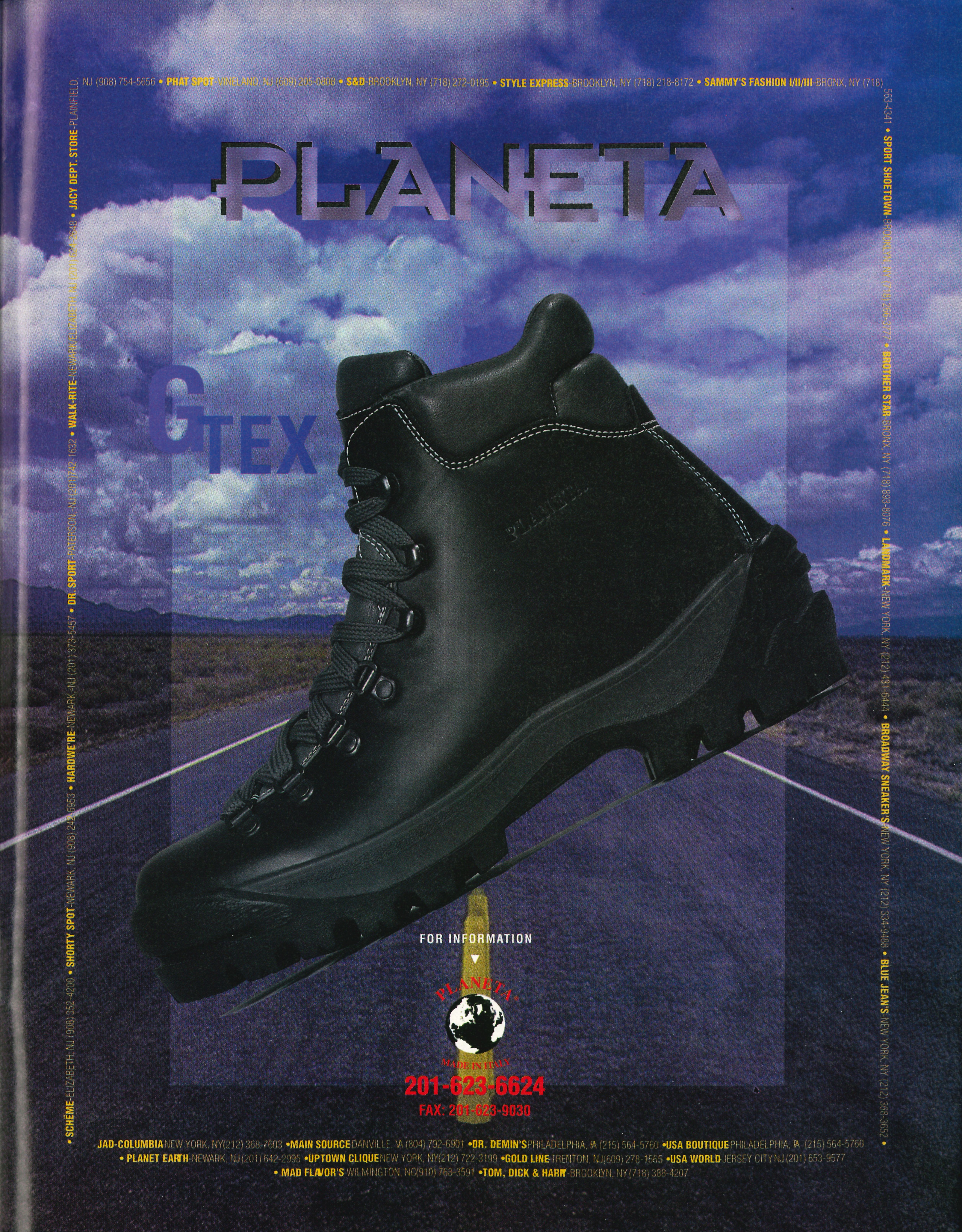

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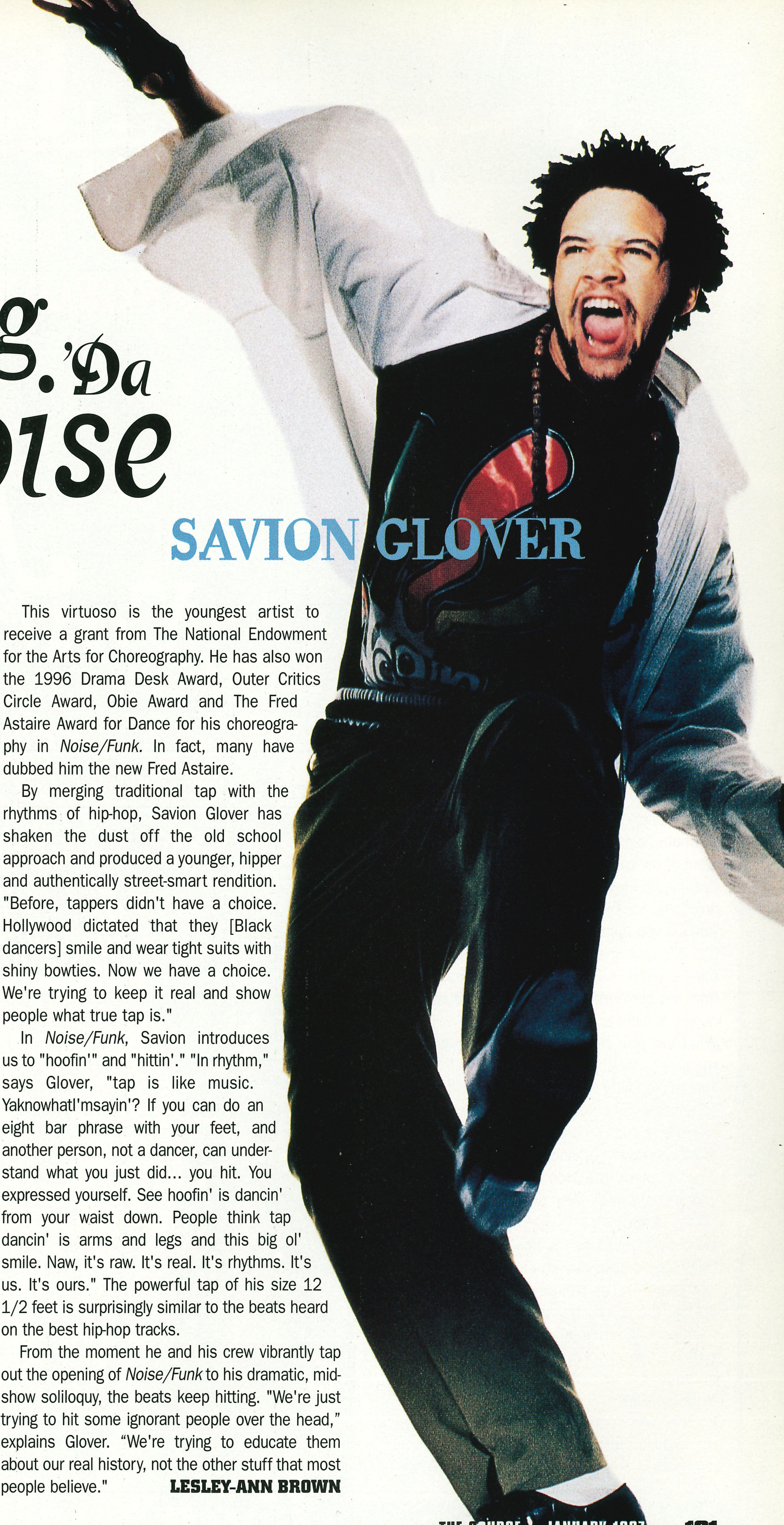
State of the Art

The Hip-Hop Generation Moves Beyond The Rhyme

If you think the Hip-Hop Generation is breaking new ground in only one art form, don't sleep, kid. Each generation produces its own Bearden, Basquiat, Sammy Davis Jr., Ella, or Baldwin, and despite our high-tech world view, our time is no different. The arts continue to be relevant. Young, creative artists are making their presence felt in a variety of disciplines—from Broadway hit-makers to literary wordmasters—reminding us that beats, rhymes and freestyles come in many forms. Here are a few trendsetters to keep an eye on that you may be telling your own grandchildren about.

Bring 'Da Noise

SAVION GLOVER



Twenty-two years ago a woman looked at her baby son and prophetically named him Savion. Today, Broadway's 'savior' could not have a more appropriate name. It's as if his mom knew that one day he would breathe life into the stagnating world of Broadway with each exhilarating tap of his shoe.

"I'm just chillin', keepin' it real," Glover says of his success. "Who knows what the future holds?" Winner of four and nominated for a total of nine Tony Awards, *Bring In 'Da Noise, Bring In 'Da Funk* holds out a very promising future. The routinely sold-out Broadway performance celebrates every nuance of Black history in this country, from the moment we were unwillingly brought to these shores to the present. With each tap of his feet, Glover conjures up the slave drums of old and hip-hop beats of new. The reviews are all unanimous in their praise. Theater-goers have rarely parted with their hard-earned money for high-priced Broadway tickets with such ease as for this show. Neither has the history of African-American survival through "the beat" ever been so eloquently and vibrantly told.

Every genre has its innovators. For jazz, Coltrane was among the few. Pop music's Michael Jackson left a road too red-hot to duplicate. For many, Snoop and Nas have brought rap to new heights. Another level. This is where Savion Glover stands.

With his waist-low pants, naps proudly locking on his crown, gruff facial hair, and endearing presence, he is the brother from the block who most kids find familiar. Encouraged to tap by his mother, Glover first started dancing at the age of six and eventually moved on to showcases. You may remember Glover regularly tapping his way down *Sesame Street* and then making his Broadway debut at age twelve in *The Tap Dance Kid*. Savion then appeared alongside Gregory Hines in George C. Wolfe's *Jelly's Last Jam*, and was also featured with Sammy Davis Jr. in the film *Tap*.

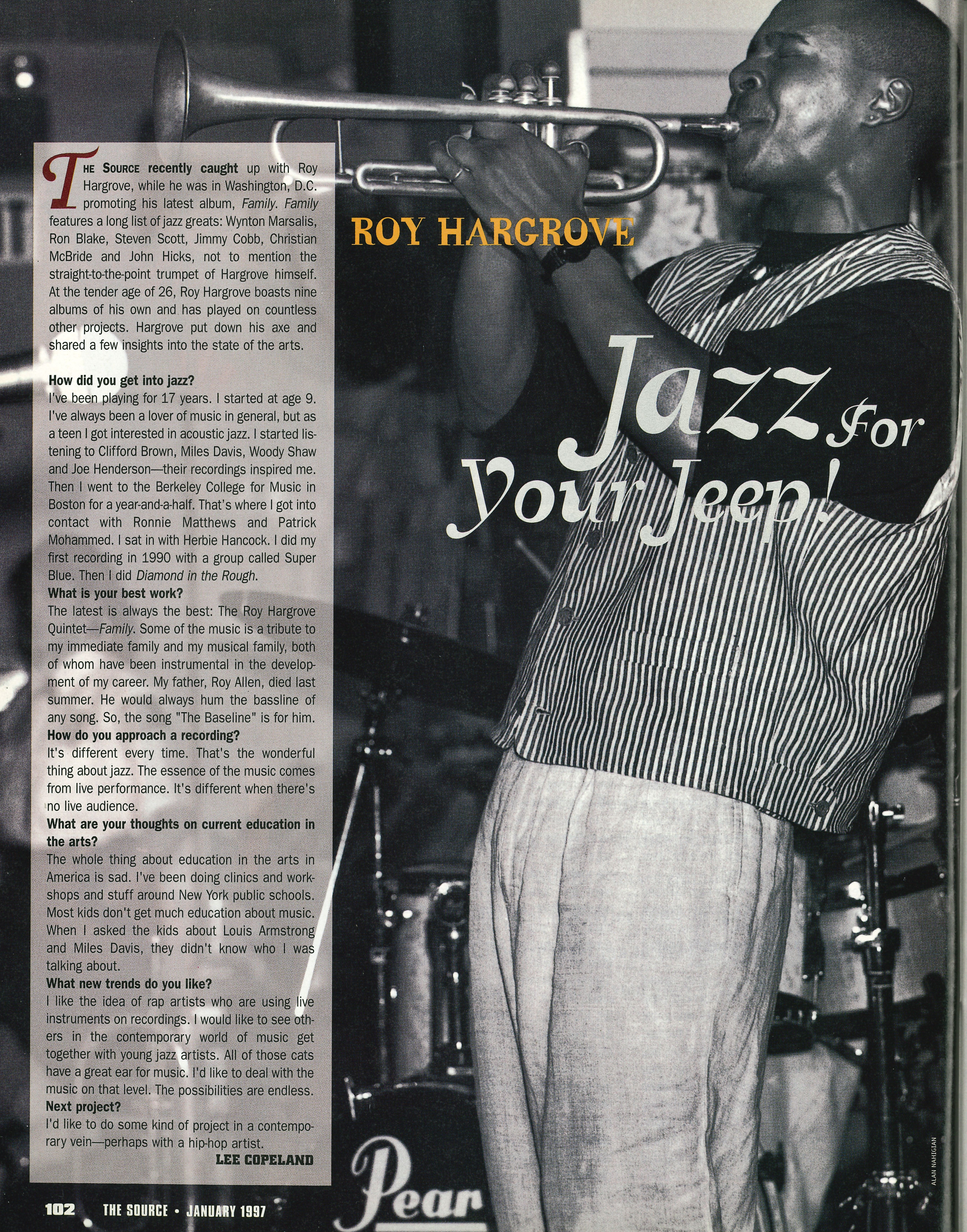
This virtuoso is the youngest artist to receive a grant from The National Endowment for the Arts for Choreography. He has also won the 1996 Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, Obie Award and The Fred Astaire Award for Dance for his choreography in *Noise/Funk*. In fact, many have dubbed him the new Fred Astaire.

By merging traditional tap with the rhythms of hip-hop, Savion Glover has shaken the dust off the old school approach and produced a younger, hipper and authentically street-smart rendition. "Before, tappers didn't have a choice. Hollywood dictated that they [Black dancers] smile and wear tight suits with shiny bowties. Now we have a choice. We're trying to keep it real and show people what true tap is."

In *Noise/Funk*, Savion introduces us to "hoofin'" and "hittin'." "In rhythm," says Glover, "tap is like music. YaknowhatI'msayin'? If you can do an eight bar phrase with your feet, and another person, not a dancer, can understand what you just did... you hit. You expressed yourself. See hoofin' is dancin' from your waist down. People think tap dancin' is arms and legs and this big ol' smile. Naw, it's raw. It's real. It's rhythms. It's us. It's ours." The powerful tap of his size 12 1/2 feet is surprisingly similar to the beats heard on the best hip-hop tracks.

From the moment he and his crew vibrantly tap out the opening of *Noise/Funk* to his dramatic, mid-show soliloquy, the beats keep hitting. "We're just trying to hit some ignorant people over the head," explains Glover. "We're trying to educate them about our real history, not the other stuff that most people believe." **LESLEY-ANN BROWN**

SAVION GLOVER: PHOTOS/OUTLINE-MICHAEL WALLS, STYLING/GUILLERMO, GROOMING/CRAIG VANDERBRULLE



ALAN HANIGAN

Jazz For Your Jeep!

ROY HARGROVE

The Source recently caught up with Roy Hargrove, while he was in Washington, D.C. promoting his latest album, *Family*. *Family* features a long list of jazz greats: Wynton Marsalis, Ron Blake, Steven Scott, Jimmy Cobb, Christian McBride and John Hicks, not to mention the straight-to-the-point trumpet of Hargrove himself. At the tender age of 26, Roy Hargrove boasts nine albums of his own and has played on countless other projects. Hargrove put down his axe and shared a few insights into the state of the arts.

How did you get into jazz?

I've been playing for 17 years. I started at age 9. I've always been a lover of music in general, but as a teen I got interested in acoustic jazz. I started listening to Clifford Brown, Miles Davis, Woody Shaw and Joe Henderson—their recordings inspired me. Then I went to the Berkeley College for Music in Boston for a year-and-a-half. That's where I got into contact with Ronnie Matthews and Patrick Mohammed. I sat in with Herbie Hancock. I did my first recording in 1990 with a group called Super Blue. Then I did *Diamond in the Rough*.

What is your best work?

The latest is always the best: The Roy Hargrove Quintet—*Family*. Some of the music is a tribute to my immediate family and my musical family, both of whom have been instrumental in the development of my career. My father, Roy Allen, died last summer. He would always hum the bassline of any song. So, the song "The Baseline" is for him.

How do you approach a recording?

It's different every time. That's the wonderful thing about jazz. The essence of the music comes from live performance. It's different when there's no live audience.

What are your thoughts on current education in the arts?

The whole thing about education in the arts in America is sad. I've been doing clinics and workshops and stuff around New York public schools. Most kids don't get much education about music. When I asked the kids about Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis, they didn't know who I was talking about.

What new trends do you like?

I like the idea of rap artists who are using live instruments on recordings. I would like to see others in the contemporary world of music get together with young jazz artists. All of those cats have a great ear for music. I'd like to deal with the music on that level. The possibilities are endless.

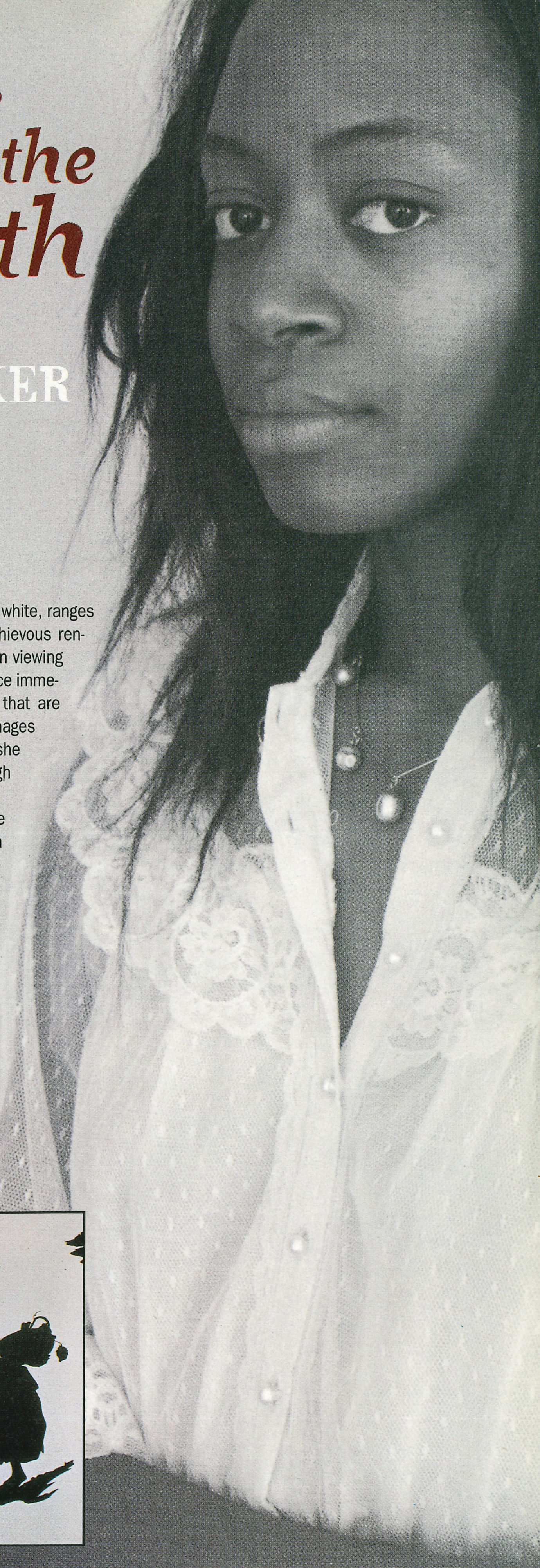
Next project?

I'd like to do some kind of project in a contemporary vein—perhaps with a hip-hop artist.

LEE COPELAND

Painting the Dirty South

KARA WALKER



If her voice is soft it's because her work is loud—and also titillatingly funny. Born in Stockton, CA, Kara Walker, now 26, was exposed to art at an early age. Her father is also a visual artist and teacher. Early on he encouraged and supported the young Walker in her dream of becoming an artist. Of his feelings on her choice of profession, Kara notes, "Oh, he's great. He's very supportive." Given her quiet demeanor, she recognized that there had to be another way to communicate to a world that often only tunes in to noise-makers.

To Walker, drawing and painting is the way to cut through the clamor. "It's a language for me. I've always been kind of shy. It's only recently that I've been spouting at the mouth like this," she laughs. "Drawing and painting and little bits of writing have always been my way of communicating." After receiving her BFA at Atlanta College of Art, she received her MA in painting at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1994.

Her ability to keep the politics in her work subtle while depicting historical fact is what makes Walker's work stand out. She carefully presents different dimensions to the viewer with undertones that emphasize the American preoccupation with race.

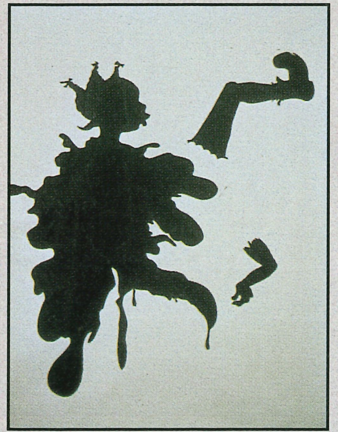
Her art, which is trade-marked by her use of black cut-outs of figures on backdrops of white, ranges from explosive Black girls to mischievous renditions of the frolicking South. Upon viewing her work, one realizes its importance immediately: Walker takes stereotypes that are historically painful, and through images of race, history, sex, and gender, she actually diverts the pain through sophisticated revenge.

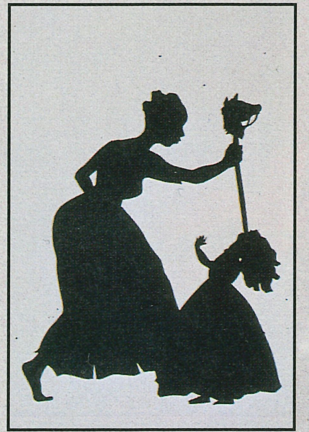
"In my work I try to address the overdose of reality that has, to a point, become almost fictional," says Walker. "You can't really access the truth anymore once it's been overplayed. Much of fiction and non-fiction sort of collide, particularly in inter and intra-racial environments or relationships."

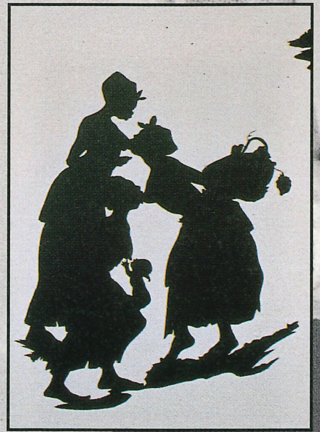
Kara Walker's work is on exhibit at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art from February 12-May 13, 1997, and at the Whitney Biennial in NYC, which opens March 20, 1997.

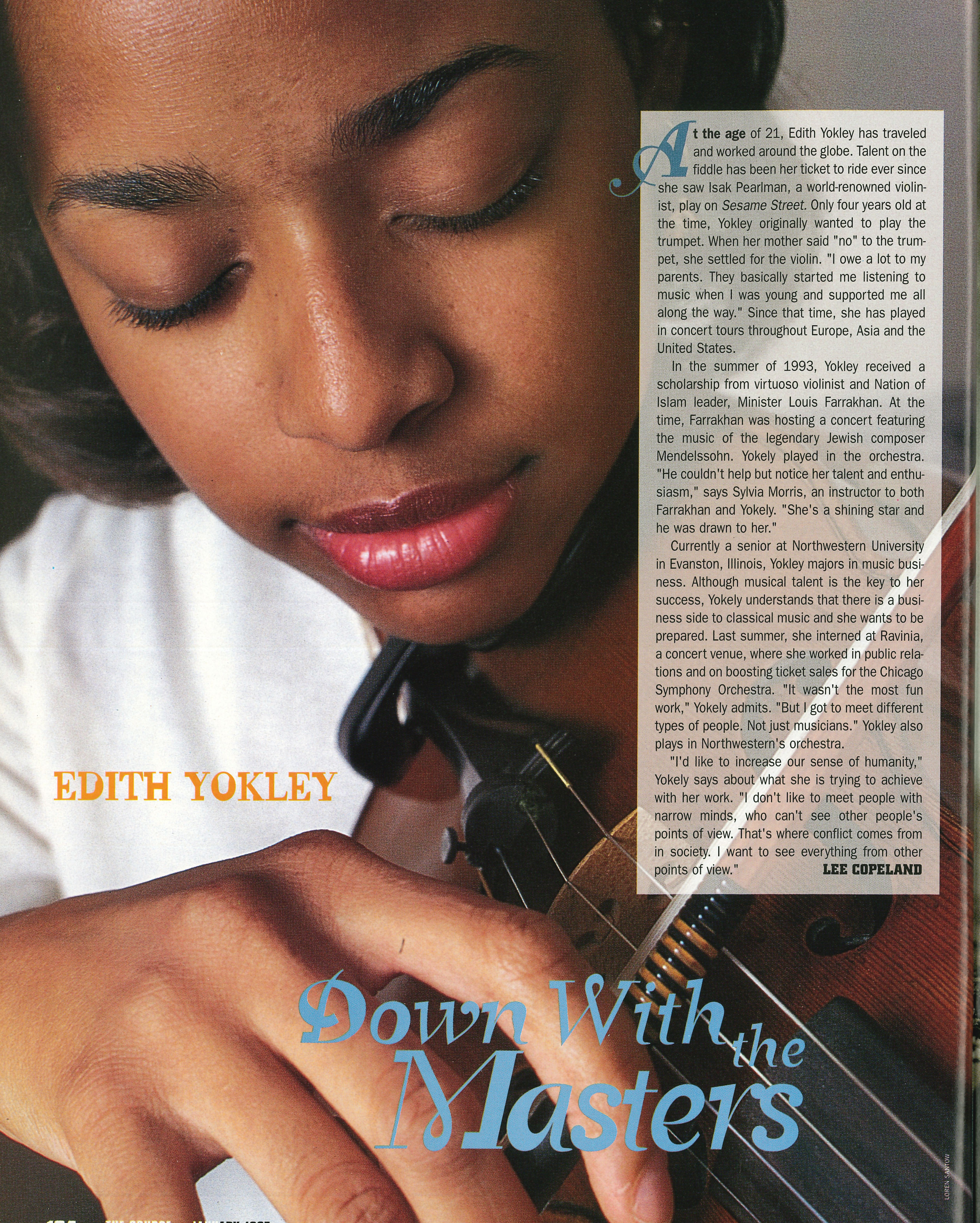
LESLEY-ANN BROWN

BRENT SIKKEMA & WOOSTER GARDENS









LOREN SANTOW

Down With the Masters

EDITH YOKLEY

At the age of 21, Edith Yokley has traveled and worked around the globe. Talent on the fiddle has been her ticket to ride ever since she saw Isak Pearlman, a world-renowned violinist, play on *Sesame Street.* Only four years old at the time, Yokley originally wanted to play the trumpet. When her mother said "no" to the trumpet, she settled for the violin. "I owe a lot to my parents. They basically started me listening to music when I was young and supported me all along the way." Since that time, she has played in concert tours throughout Europe, Asia and the United States.

In the summer of 1993, Yokley received a scholarship from virtuoso violinist and Nation of Islam leader, Minister Louis Farrakhan. At the time, Farrakhan was hosting a concert featuring the music of the legendary Jewish composer Mendelssohn. Yokely played in the orchestra. "He couldn't help but notice her talent and enthusiasm," says Sylvia Morris, an instructor to both Farrakhan and Yokely. "She's a shining star and he was drawn to her."

Currently a senior at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Yokley majors in music business. Although musical talent is the key to her success, Yokely understands that there is a business side to classical music and she wants to be prepared. Last summer, she interned at Ravinia, a concert venue, where she worked in public relations and on boosting ticket sales for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. "It wasn't the most fun work," Yokely admits. "But I got to meet different types of people. Not just musicians." Yokley also plays in Northwestern's orchestra.

"I'd like to increase our sense of humanity," Yokely says about what she is trying to achieve with her work. "I don't like to meet people with narrow minds, who can't see other people's points of view. That's where conflict comes from in society. I want to see everything from other points of view." **LEE COPELAND**

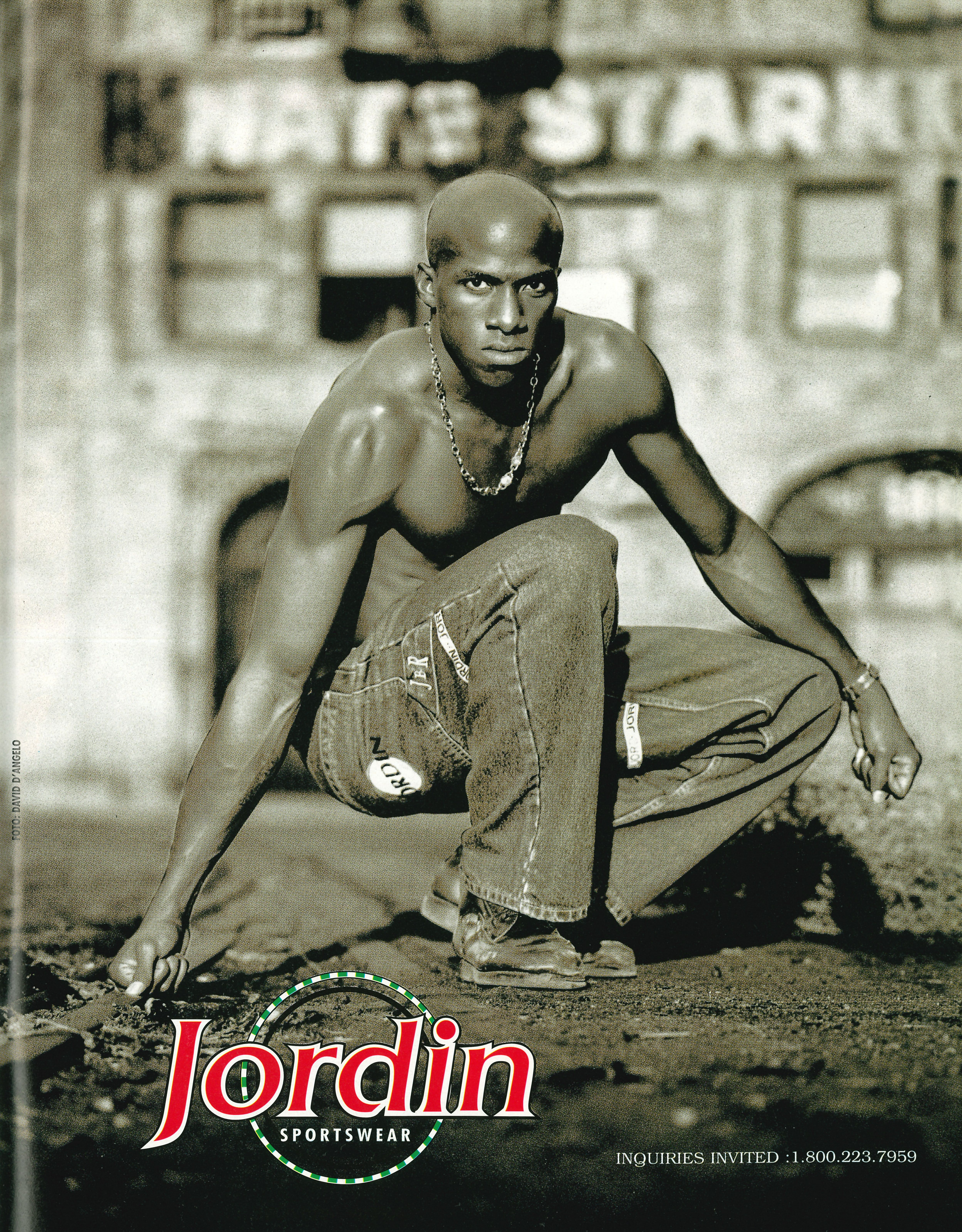


FOTO: DAVID D'ANGELO

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The Literary Shuffle

With two critically acclaimed works of poetry under his belt, Paul Beatty is no freshman to the world of language. Those familiar with his work can attest to this young man's agility with the spoken and written word. His work can be funny and yet so intellectually sharp that before you know it he's cut right into your psyche.

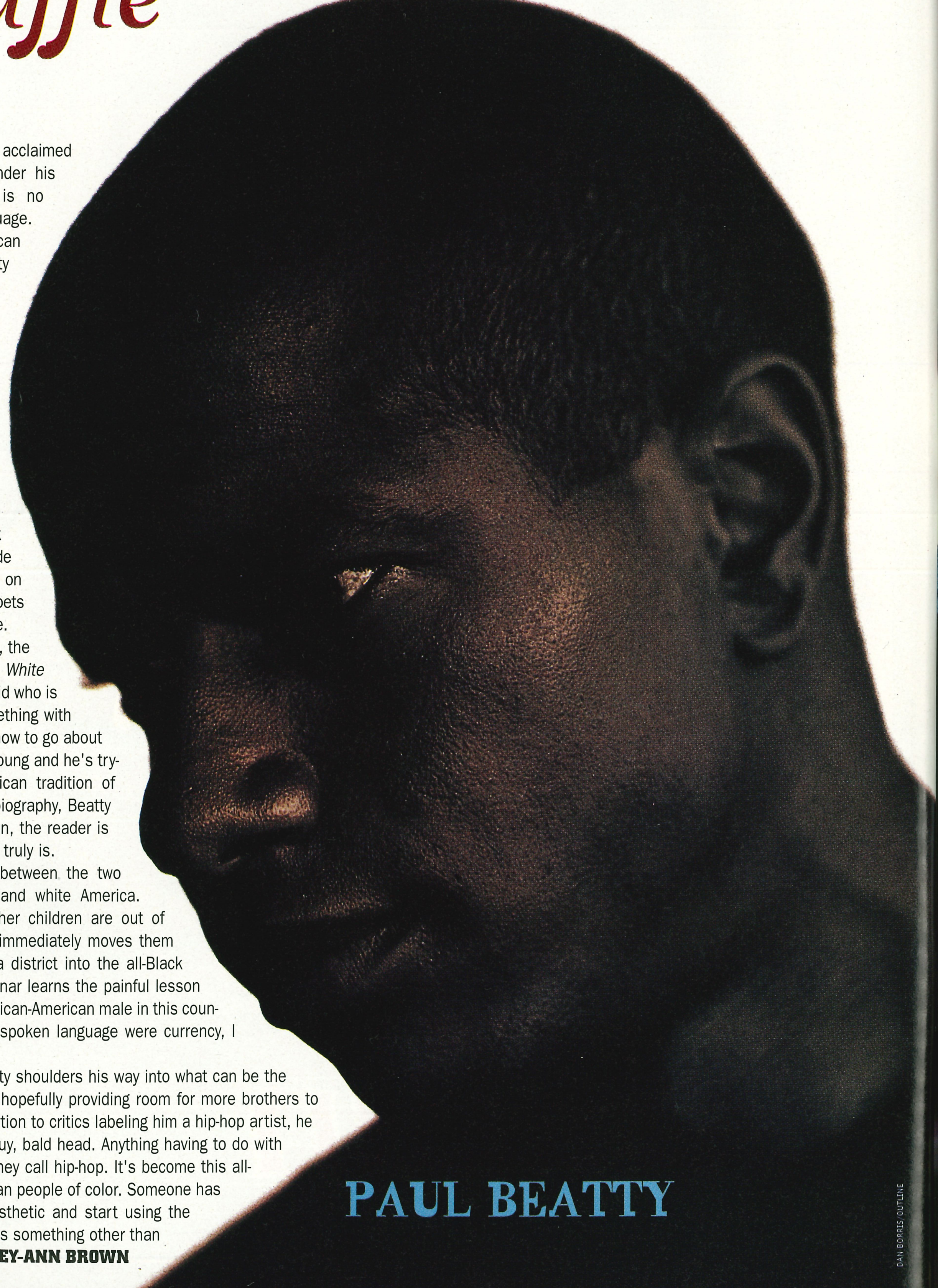
Born and raised in West Los Angeles, the young Beatty attended Brooklyn College, where he majored in psychology. Mixing sly witticism, political commentary and a rhythm of words with a flow that will knock even the hardest of rappers upside their head, he stood out early on amongst the herd of wanna-be poets in the NYC downtown poetry scene.

He describes Gunnar Kaufman, the main character of his first novel, *White Boy Shuffle*, as "this little weird kid who is trying to live his life and do something with it, but has no idea what to do or how to go about doing it. He has ideas, but he's young and he's trying." Following the African-American tradition of making one's first book an autobiography, Beatty flips it with such probing precision, the reader is reminded of how comic our world truly is.

Gunnar Kaufmann is caught between the two very polarized worlds of Black and white America. When his mother realizes that her children are out of touch with their Blackness, she immediately moves them out of the affluent Santa Monica district into the all-Black Hillside neighborhood. Here, Gunnar learns the painful lesson of what it means to be a young African-American male in this country. "In a world where body and spoken language were currency, I was broke as hell."

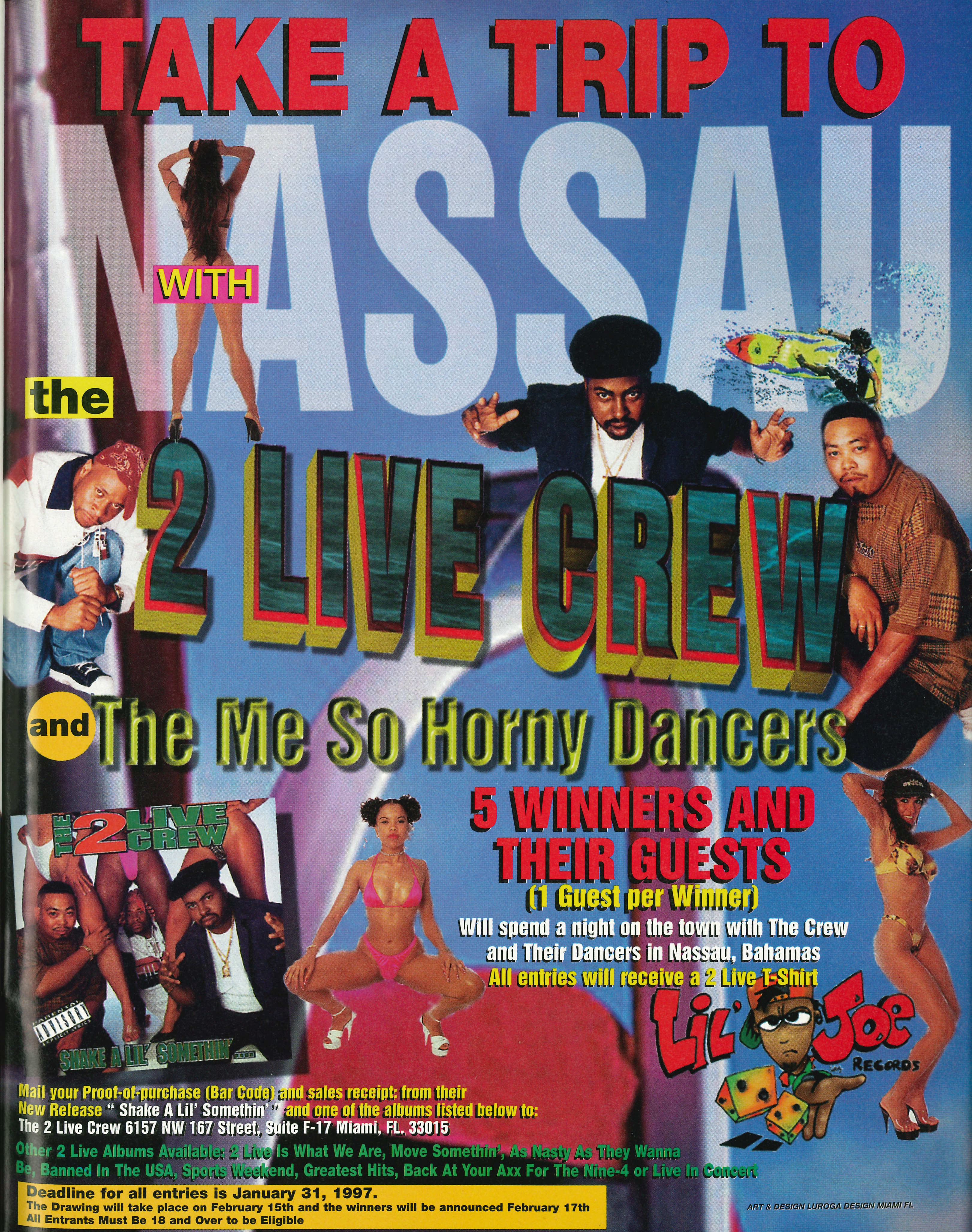
Defying every stereotype, Beatty shoulders his way into what can be the asphyxiating world of publishing, hopefully providing room for more brothers to enter. When asked about his reaction to critics labeling him a hip-hop artist, he says, "They see a skinny Black guy, bald head. Anything having to do with urban Blacks and anything new they call hip-hop. It's become this all-encompassing term to define urban people of color. Someone has to work on an actual hip-hop aesthetic and start using the word [hip-hop] in a way that means something other than a label."

LESLEY-ANN BROWN



PAUL BEATTY

DAN BORRIS/OUTLINE



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The Poet Of El Barrio

BART EVERLY

WILLIE PERDOMO

Many critics have lauded him as the next Langston Hughes, and with a remarkable first collection of poetry entitled *Where A Nickel Costs a Dime*, Willie Perdomo may have little or no trouble living up to that expectation, while at the same time realizing his own potential.

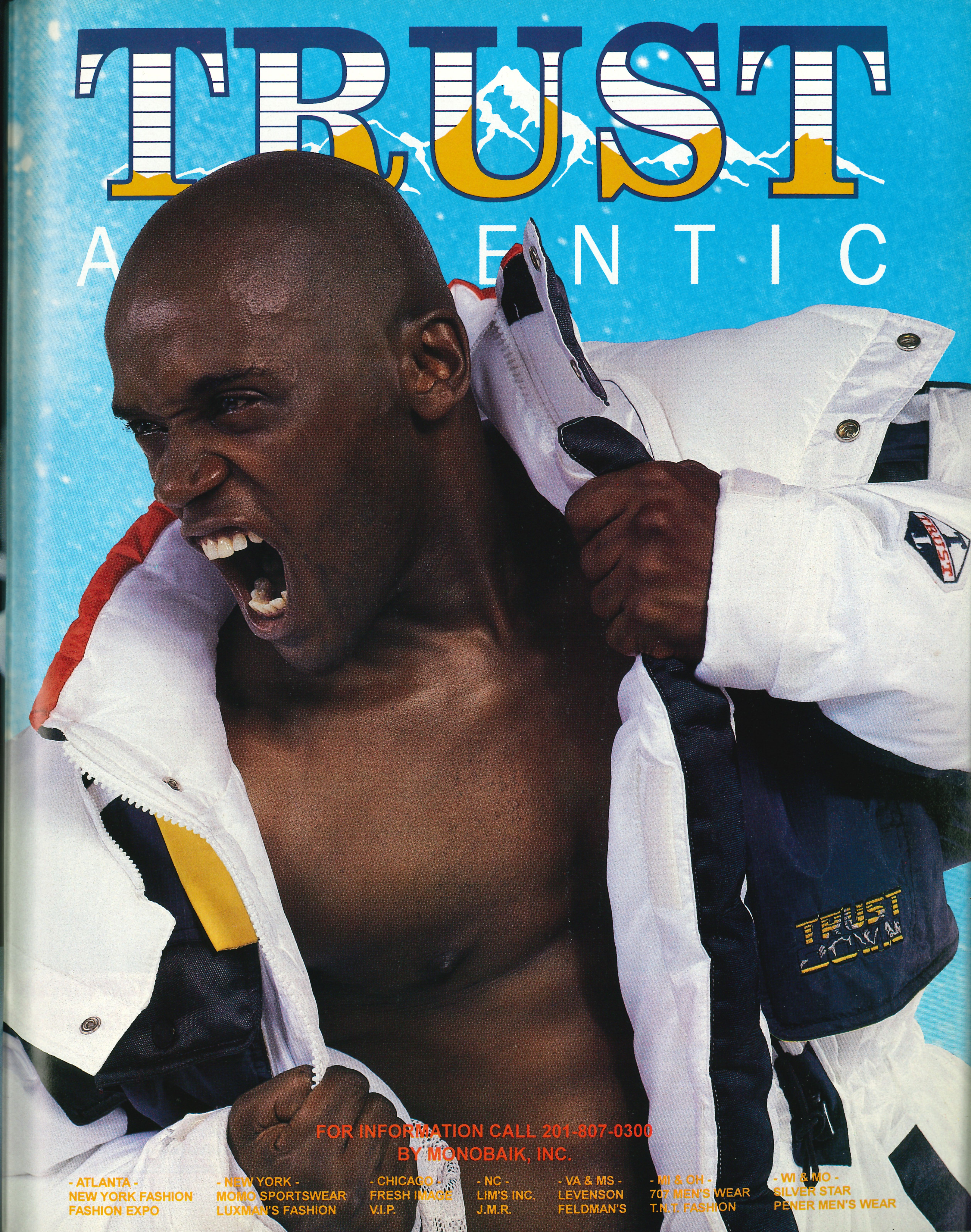
Born and raised in East Harlem, Perdomo began writing poetry in high school when a racial slur drew him into a fight. A school employee, who was also a poet, pulled Perdomo's coat. "Do something more constructive with your energy." He invited Perdomo to a poetry reading, which Perdomo attended out of respect. While there, some of the poetry that he heard touched Perdomo. "It was then I really understood what he meant by doing something else with my energy."

Among the many titles that Perdomo has read is Piri Thomas' *Down These Mean Streets*, which for Perdomo describes someone like himself—a Puerto Rican youth growing up in Harlem. Through this piece he realized the true strength and power of words. Among his other influences are Langston Hughes, Ntozake Shange and Claude Brown.

"I toured the college lecture circuit with other poets such as Tony Medina," commented Perdomo on getting his work 'out there' and building a solid reputation as a capable poet. "Admittedly, the poetry slam at Nuyerican Poets Cafe in New York City, is where I got a lot of exposure to people out there who are into poetry." Using language reminiscent of bebop and hip-hop, his words paint stories from single mothers who work too hard, to an ambivalent love-trip via the train with a girl named Tanisha.

"Poets are witnesses," Perdomo says. "We interpret what's going on around us. There are different categories of poets...you got political, militant, gay and street poets. All types of poets who interpret their reality according to who and what they believe. In many ways, they act as voices for our times and express our sentiments."

When asked if he felt the general audience is supportive of his work, he adds, "Yeah, I think the audience is supportive and it can be diverse at times. The people come out. The audience is out there. They wanna hear what other people have to say." **LESLEY-ANN BROWN**



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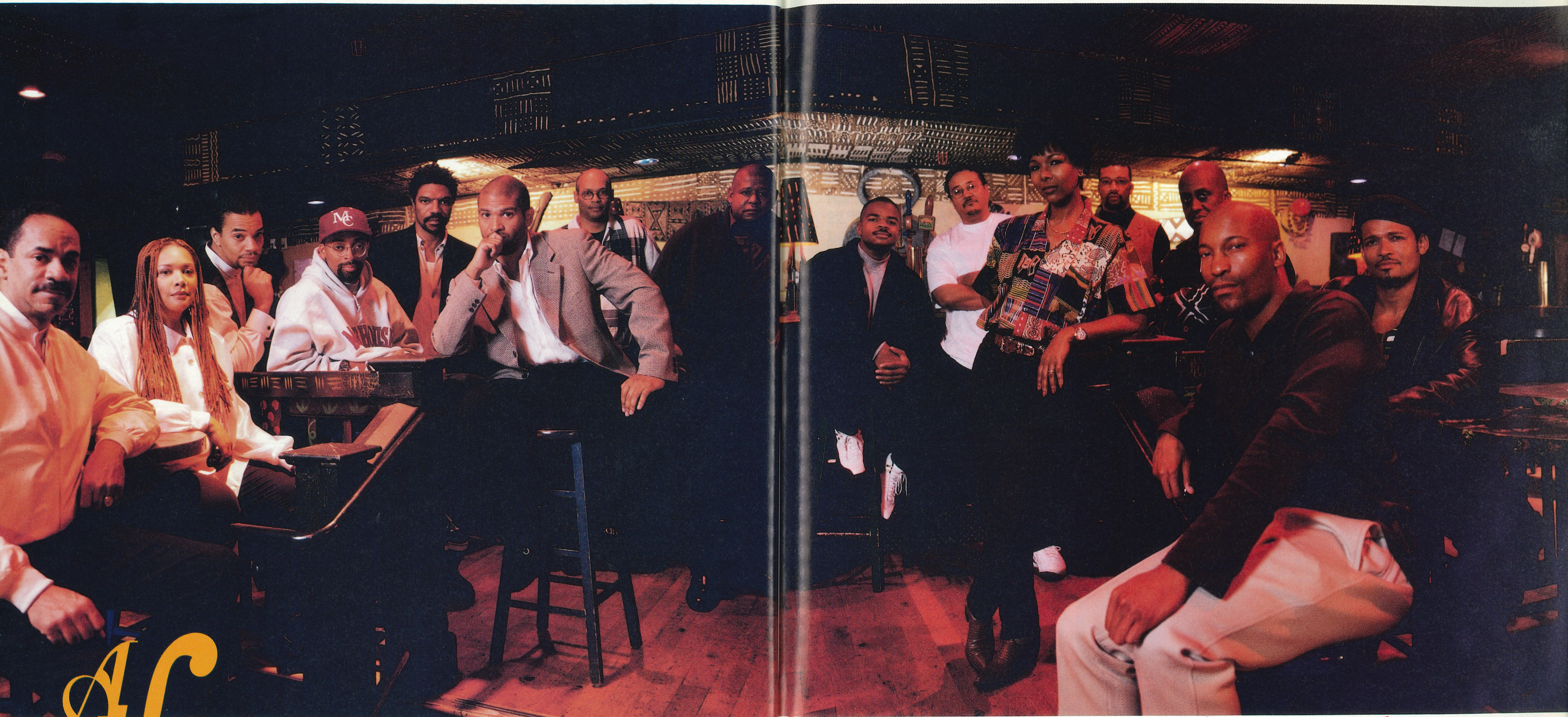


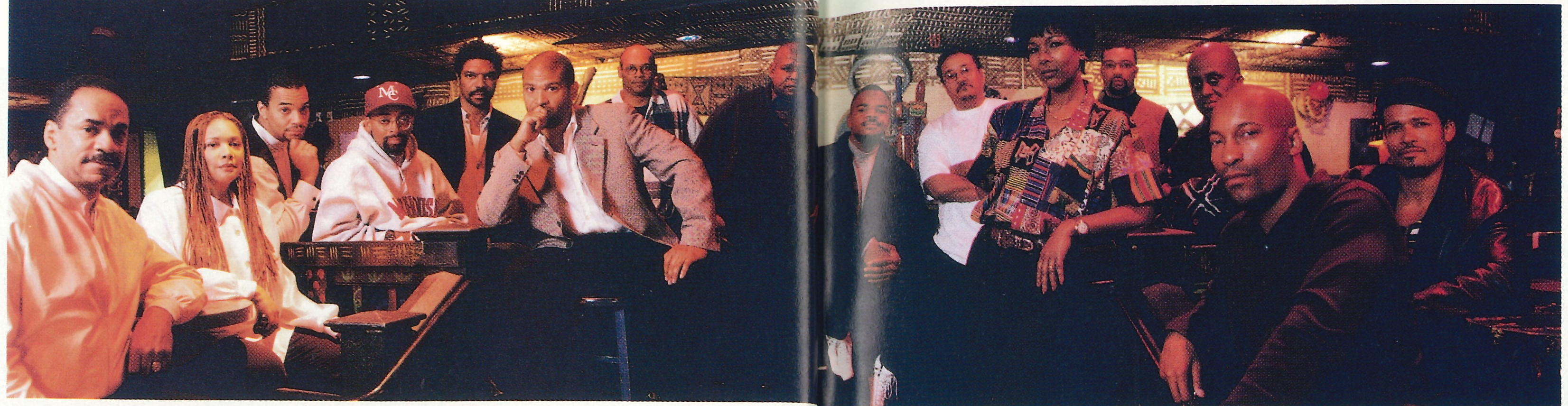
A League of their Own

Underpaid and underutilized, Black directors still continue to survive and sometimes even thrive in the face of the hostile studio system. For that we salute them in a moment of solidarity and reflection.

Story By Todd Williams • Photography By Kwaku Alston

On July 12, 1991, *The New York Times*, America's "newspaper of record," ran a cover photo of eight Black film directors for a Sunday magazine story entitled, "They Gotta Have Us: Hollywood's Black Directors." Among the chosen eight were Spike Lee, John Singleton, Reginald and Warrington Hudlin, Ernest Dickerson, Mario Van Peebles, et al. The article gushed, "Black film properties may be to the '90s what the car phone was to the '80s... every studio executive has to have one."

Yes, those were the days of 'wine and roses,' as every studio anxiously anticipated the next Spike Lee. Agents combed film schools looking for another John Singleton. Studio suits hung by their phones waiting for another collect call from Straight-



The Directors at The House of the Blues, October 12, 1996, 9:45am *(from left to right):* Tim Reid, Julie Dash, Rusty Cundieff, Spike Lee, Vondie Curtis Hall, Reginald Hudlin, Doug McHenry, Forest Whitaker, F. Gary Gray, Ernest Dickerson, Euzhan Palcy, Preston Whitmore, Bill Duke, John Singleton, Mario Van Peebles.

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out-of-Brooklyn. It was a heady time never experienced by pioneering Black filmmakers like Gordon Parks, Melvin Van Peebles or Ossie Davis. Never had it felt so good to be Black in Tinseltown. But just as fast as the euphoria spread, it disappeared even more quickly. Though it was only five short years ago that the eight directors gathered for the historic photo, as they say on Sunset Boulevard, "that was ages ago, dahling!"

Today, Black directors continue to work, but there are no more *New York Times* photo shoots. Yes, there have been a number of directors to make their debuts since the article was published—Allen and Albert Hughes (*Menace II Society*), Carl Franklin (*One False Move*), Rusty Cundieff (*Fear of a Black Hat*), F. Gary Gray (*Friday*), Forest Whitaker (*Waiting to Exhale*), Vondie Curtis Hall (*Gridlock*), Tim Reid (*Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*), Doug McHenry (*House Party II, Jason's Lyric*), Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*)—but they generally work in undercredited, low budget isolation. On the other hand, their white counterparts work with full studio cooperation, budgets the size of third-world economies, and the support of a fairly objective media.

Cut-off from the Hollywood machine, Black actors and directors in the post-Arsenio era have little access to the national audience that's needed in breaking a film. Take for instance *Vanity Fair*, the glam mag of conspicuous consumption which annually features photo essays of actors and actresses, stars and star makers, and wannabes and has-beens in its issue dedicated to Hollywood. That is, *white* Hollywood. Last year's cover of leading male actors (April 1996) found Will Smith's mug conveniently tucked into the crease of a fold-out cover, and in April 1995, Angela Bassett was also hidden from view. Such slights are too frequent and offensive to protest. (If you don't believe me, ask Paul Robeson, Harry Belafonte and Dorian Harewood.)

As for *VF*'s perennial dis, we don't need them to name the brothas-and-sistas who traffic our dreams and facilitate our desires. What a bold political stroke if they chose to meet at one place themselves: no hidden agendas, no five-point action plans, just make a statement by *choosing* to stand together for a simple photograph. There would be but a single criteria: that you have directed a theatrically-released, feature-length film—or as Rusty Cundieff put it, "any Black person who's ever yelled 'action.'"

But before proceeding with the notion of a united directors photo for THE SOURCE, the first call that had to be placed was to Brooklyn. It was a brief conversation with the opinionated filmmaker who has raged against Hollywood's apartheid system since he single-handedly set off the boom in Black cinema.

"I wanna shoot a group photo of all the Black directors."

"But most of the guys live on the West coast," he says. "Spike, I know you might have a problem with..."

He cuts me off. "Well it ain't no East-West coast thing, if that's what you think! Yeah! I'll do it."

With Spike's participation, the first of several directors fell in place: Bill Duke (*Rage In Harlem, The Cemetery Club*), Rusty Cundieff (*Fear of a Black Hat, Tales From The Hood*), independent director Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*), and *House Party* progenitor Reginald Hudlin (*House Party, Boomerang, Bebe's Kids, The Great White Hype*). Others would follow, and the list swelled to a total of fifteen.

On the day of the shoot I was acutely aware of that recurring phenomenon in Black culture... C.P. time. That's where standard time is replaced by a more spiritual inner clock. Eventually, however, they rolled in, one-by-one, without bodyguards or attitude, some dressed in the requested attire (dark pants, white shirt), others as they saw fit.

First on the scene was Ernest Dickerson (*Juice, Bulletproof*), followed by F. Gary Gray. Then came Rusty Cundieff, talking about his upcoming romantic comedy, *Sprung!* Tim Reid spoke of his production facility in Virginia, and Martinique-born Euzhan Palcy (*A Dry White Season*) broke from casting her next film, *Bessie Carmen*, to attend.

Throughout the shoot the directors behaved like dutiful schoolmates—no fighting, back-biting or ego-tripping—a tall order considering these people give direction for a living. As the session wound down, numbers were shared, compliments returned, and embraces exchanged. New friends made, old acquaintances renewed. Many chatted long after the shoot was completed. But before dispersing, the always hyper-aware Spike left the group with his analysis of hip-hop's current balkanized state, and an opinion that rings painfully true for Black religion, Black business and Black politics.

"Rappers couldn't have gotten together like this," he observes with steely irony.

"No, not without casualties!" cracked Reginald Hudlin.

Absent for various reasons, much love to those not pictured: Gordon Parks (*Shaft, Shaft Goes to Africa*), Melvin Van Peebles (*Sweet Sweetback's BaadasssssSong, Watermelon Man*), Ossie Davis (*Cotton Comes to Harlem*), Michael Schultz (*Cooley High, Car Wash, Krush Groove*), Sydney Poitier (*Let's Do It Again, A Piece of the Action, Stir Crazy*), Keenen Ivory Wayans (*I'm Gonna Get You Sucka, Low Down Dirty Shame*), Carl Franklin (*One False Move, Devil In a Blue Dress*), the Hughes Brothers (*Menace II Society, Dead Presidents*), Kevin Hooks (*Strictly Business, Passenger 57, Fled*), Robert Townsend (*Hollywood Shuffle, The Five Heartbeats, Meteor Man*), Paris Barclay (*Don't Be a Menace to South Central . . .*), Matty Rich (*Straight Out of Brooklyn*), Charles Burnett (*To Sleep With Anger, The Glass Shield*), Neema Barnett (*Better Off Dead*), Martin Lawrence (*A Thin Line Between Love and Hate*), Richard Pryor (*Jo Jo Dancer*), Charles Lane (*True Identity*), Leslie Harris (*Just Another Girl on the IRT*).

Special Thanks to:
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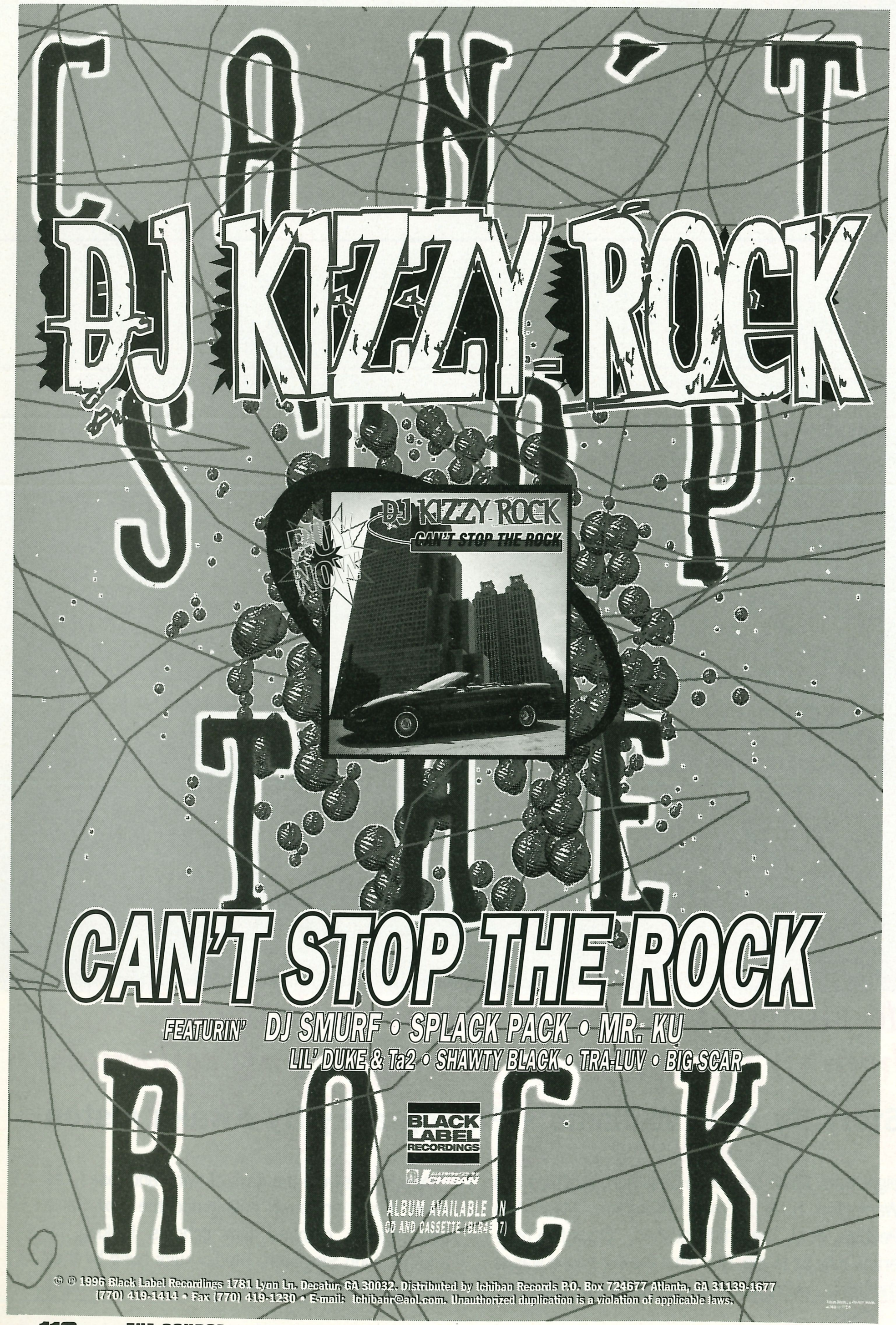
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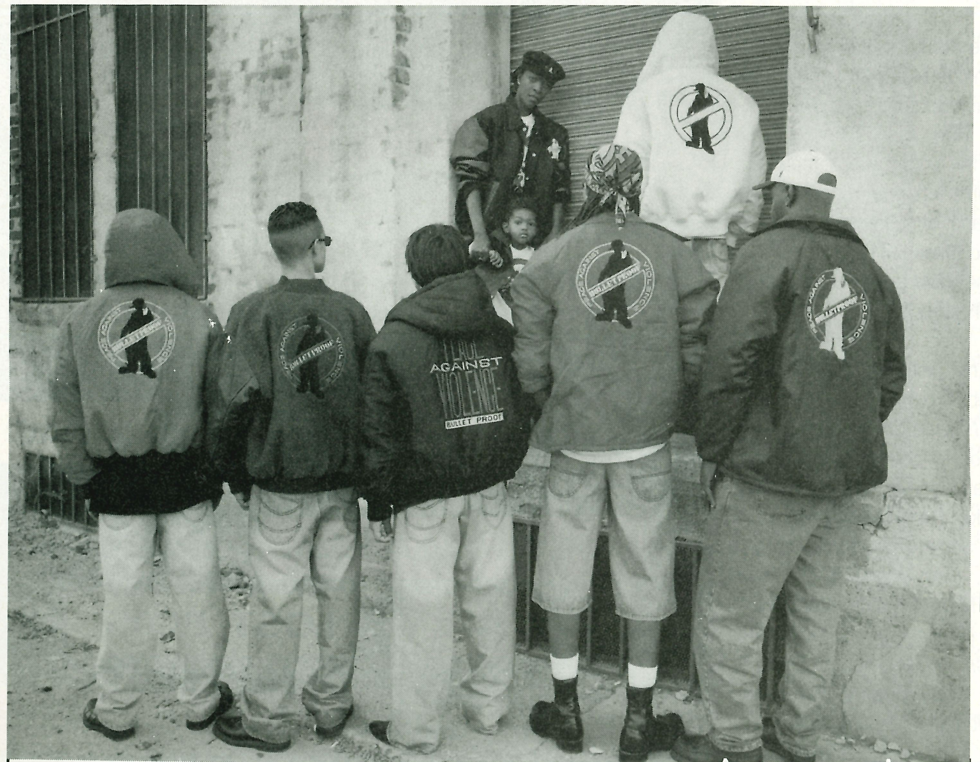

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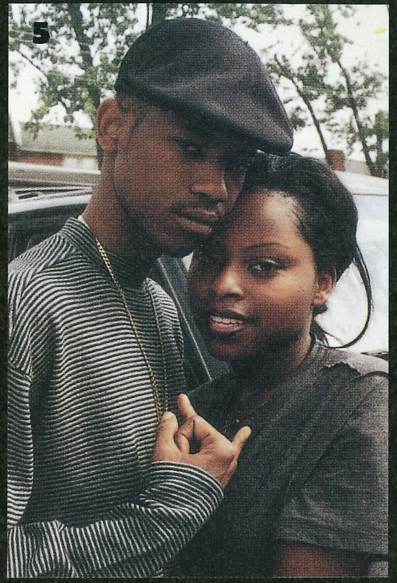

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8. Cuban linkers Ghostface Killah and Raekwon rock the spot. **9.** Urban innovation at its peak in the form of Wyclef and Erykah Badu. **10.** Organization is the key to success—just ask Organized Noize, they would know. **11.** Teddy Riley and Total, No Diggity indeed. **12.** Out with the bold, in with the new: Smif-n-Wessun making changes for the '96 as the COCOBRUVAS. **13.** Living large with cigars, Nas and Ed Lover.

14. Is Brooklyn in the house? It is if Guru and Lil' Kim have any say about it. **15.** Me-and-you, Puffy Combs-and-Outkast-too. **16.** WEESSSIIIDE!! Throwin' it up with Ice Cube and Mack 10. **17.** Hollywood trailblazers F. Gary Gray and Blair Underwood. **18.** Tyson: Hell yeah, I like gettin' paid crazy loot just for smoochin' at the camera! **19.** Walking the dogs with Method Man and Jermaine Dupri.

14

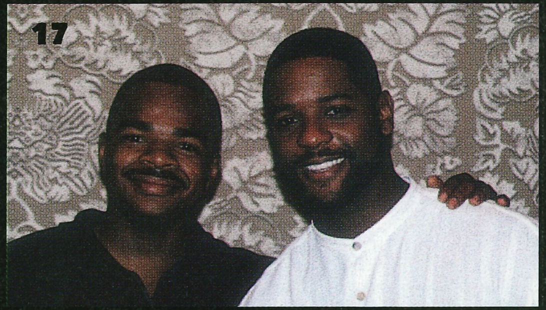
JAPHONZA TOPPING

15

J. LASH

16

J. LASH

17

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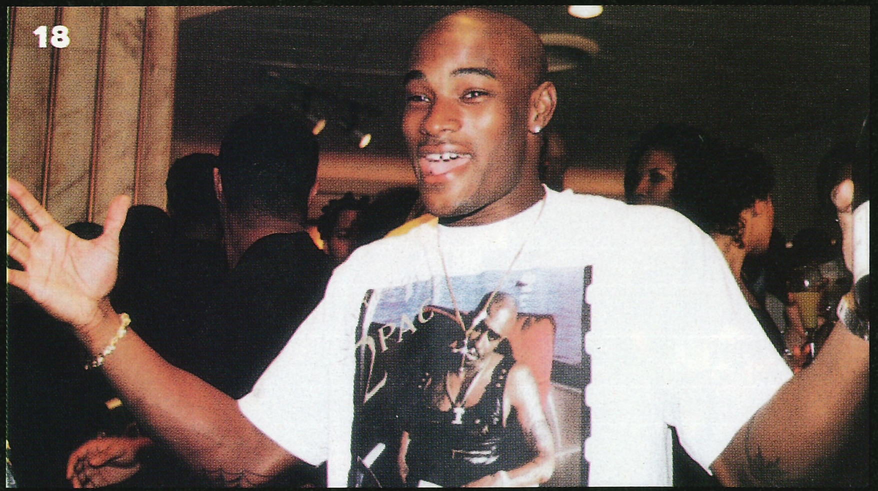

19

J. LASH

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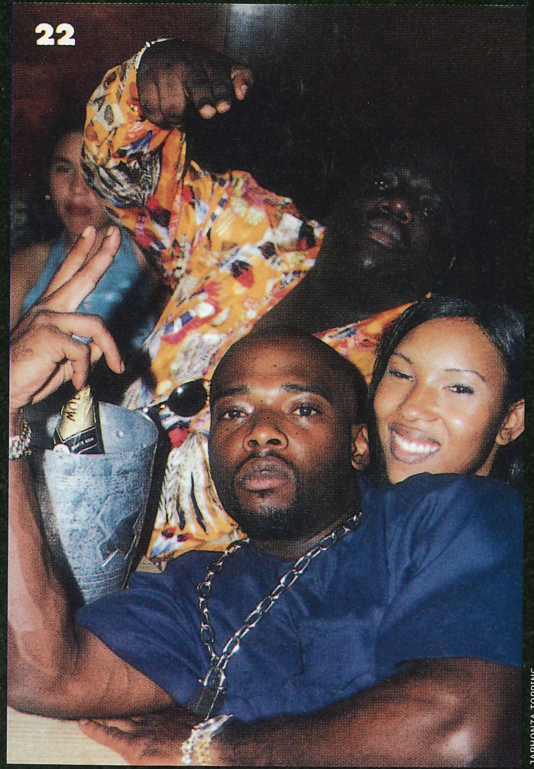
NITRO

21

JERRY EDMONDS

22



JAPHONZA TOPPING

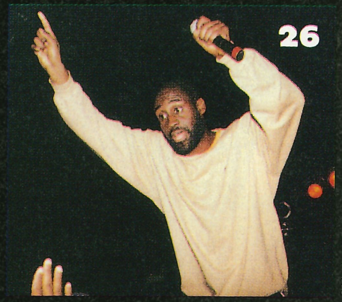
coast 2 coast

20. Lazy Bone, Grandmaster Dee and Monica showing love for the 9- stix. **21.** Joi and Goodie Mob's Gip with another bundle of Joy. **22.** Biggie and Treach throwin' up the East. **23.** Is this Yo-Yo with Quincy Jones? Q-betcha. **24.** And Penny Hardaway drives to the hole for...some cake. **25.** Beauty and the Beats: Teddy Riley, Jermaine Dupri and Queenpin. **26.** De La's Posdnuos instructs the crowd on proper sing-along-etiquette. **27.** Ol' Dirty got tah jump back and feel himself!

27

STELLA

26

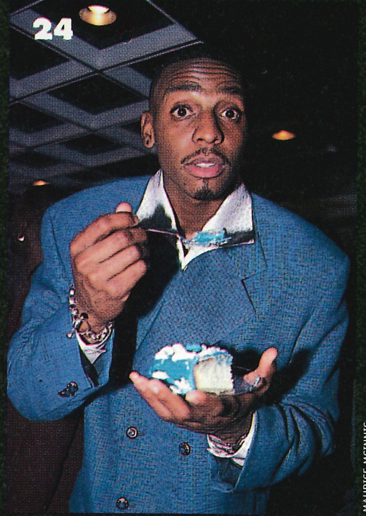


STELLA

23

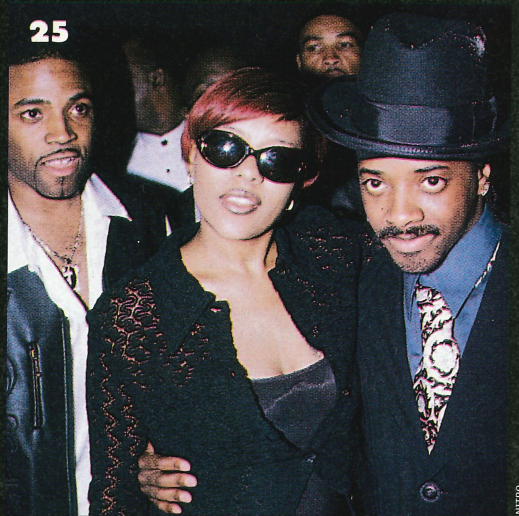
AL PEREIRA

24



MAURICE MCINNIS

25



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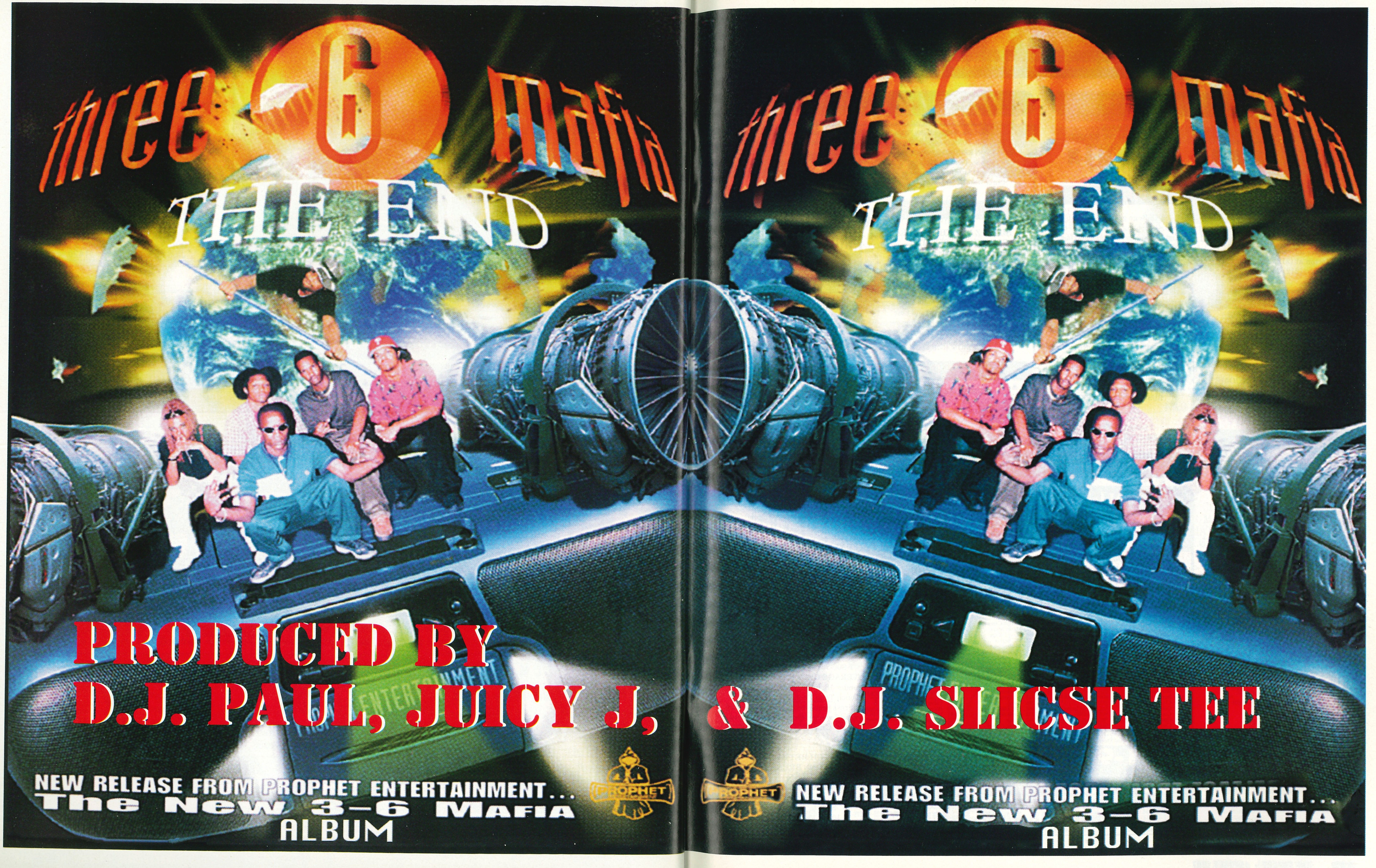

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2668	Bone, Thugs & Harmony
2692	Boyz II Men
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2652	Color Me Badd
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6226	Craig Mack
2971	Cypress Hill
3221	Da Brat
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3211	Eazy E.
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3842	Fugees
4381	Geto Boyz
4971	Gyrl
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4322	Heavy D.
4431	Hi-Five
4682	House of Pain
4231	Ice Cube
4662	Immature
5231	Jade
5222	Janet Jackson
5631	Jodeci
7932	Keith Sweat
5431	Kid N Play
5741	Kris Kross
5771	KRS-One
5521	LL Cool J
6253	M.C. Lyte
2271	Mariah Carey
6271	Marky Mark
2543	Mary J. Blige
6222	MC Brains
6384	Method Man
5221	Michael Jackson
6651	Mokenstef
6664	Monica
5673	Montell Jordan
6274	Nas
6281	Naughty by Nature
6391	New Kids OTB
6683	Notorious B.I.G.
6323	Ol' Dirty Bastard
7286	Patra
7662	P.M. Dawn
2232	Paula Abdul
7742	Prince
7822	Public Enemy
1833	Queen Latifah
7531	R. Kelly
7981	S.W.V.
7231	Sade
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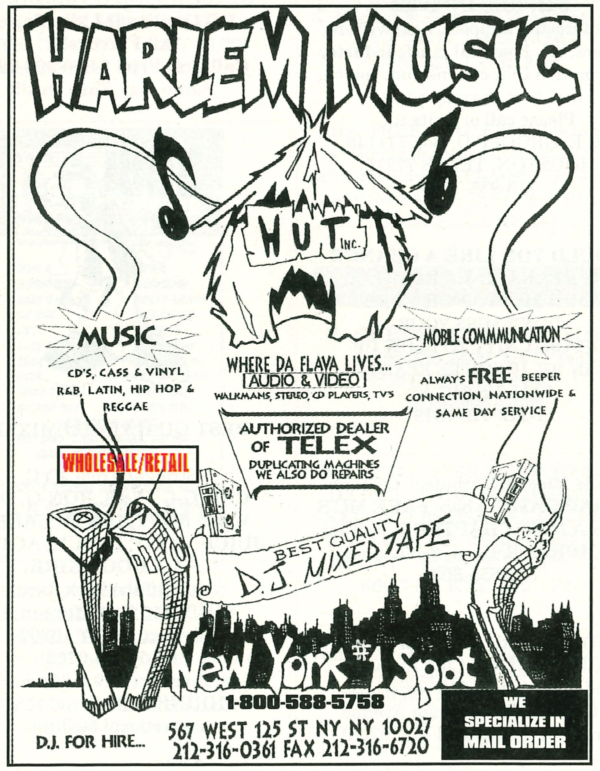
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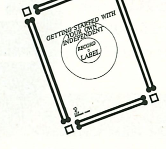
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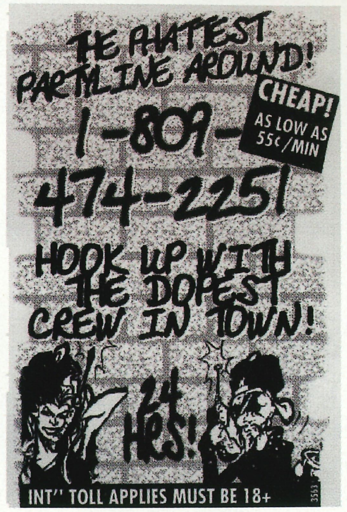

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reality check

BY BUC WILD

Won't you be my neighbor and help me roll a spliff. Won't you share my labor and join me while's I riff. Won't you help me chill before the shit gets thick. Or will you help me laugh and tell them suck my D*@#

Captain's Log Star Date 1/1/97: After finally realizing that Gangster Rap is over and its most popular icon is gone, I have decided to get a head start on all MCs and writers by embracing the true pioneer of friendship and love. He is known worldwide and has been fighting the war against prejudice and ignorance for over thirty years; and if any of you are really serious about stopping the violence, I ask that you join me in giving mad props to my friend and yours, **Mr. Rogers...** That's right boys and girls, the true O.F., short for Original Friend... Now moving right along, I've decided to ride my own tip for a minute and take on the uneasy task of trying to classify my style of writing, rather than have some broken-wrist fruit loop tell you one day that I was saying one thing when in reality I was really saying something totally different. For the record, I would like my style to be listed as the "ungrounded, professional back stabber, classroom clown, Interracial fornicator project style," inspired mostly by everyday ghetto life and Pauly Gravono's fresh Italian canolies. Now when it's all said and done and I am no longer the center of ridicule and hate, I would like to be remembered as one of the great ones like William Shakespeare or Curtis Wellington Jones, B.C.A.P (Brooklyn Certified Alcoholic Prophet)... By the way, I hear there's a small group of teens out in Denver who are claiming that I'm the anti Christ and that I should be considered an outcast by today's generation. As always, my usual response to false allegations is, "Hold it down son or I'll kick down your door and place copper bullets from ceiling to floor." Now then, since everybody is probably making a whole lot of corny ass new year's resolutions about giving up cigarettes and stopping to smoke weed, I've decided to share with you a few of my own personal goals for '97. First of all, I will be a good neighbor, but just for G.P. (short for General Principle) I will be shitting on the entire old school of hip-hop. Second, I must turn up the flames on the following artists who either escaped my wrath due to editing by THE SOURCE, or I just plain old forgot to bring the drama to you back in the days. **Snow, Warren G, Redman** (That's right son, you heard me), **Ronnie Devoe** from New Edition ("God I hate that kid"), the whole **Duck Down** family, unless BuckShot pays me the $380 dollars he owes me for shooting dice on Franklin Ave. last month, and **Shaquille O'Neal,** yo son, maybe if you stopped making wack movies and wack records and practiced your foul shots a little more you might be able to take your game to the next level and win the big one. **Sadat X,** look here, son, I don't ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever want to hear you trying to make a solo record again. I know you and the crew got some differences, but please sit down at the round table and try to work shit out to put that Brand Nubian thang back on the map before it's too late. **A+**, I've only got you by a couple of years son, but I think I'm qualified enough to give you some good advice: save your money, don't get too gassed, and remember nothing lasts forever, just ask **The Boys, Chi Ali** and **ABC**... Last up, **Faith Evans,** look here "Miss Mary J wanna be," I don't care what the Emperor says about you being a dime piece and all that shit, I'm not impressed with you and furthermore, if I catch you trying to flip any more duets in '97, I'll finish off what Lil' Kim started. By the way, **Lil' Kim**, baby girl, I just gotta tell ya you're giving this Rap Thang a new shot of life. Get yours b*tch, I Love You. P.S. The next time you pass through the Heights please stop by my office so I can talk to you... And now, without further delay, here are the winners of the 1996 Reality Check awards.

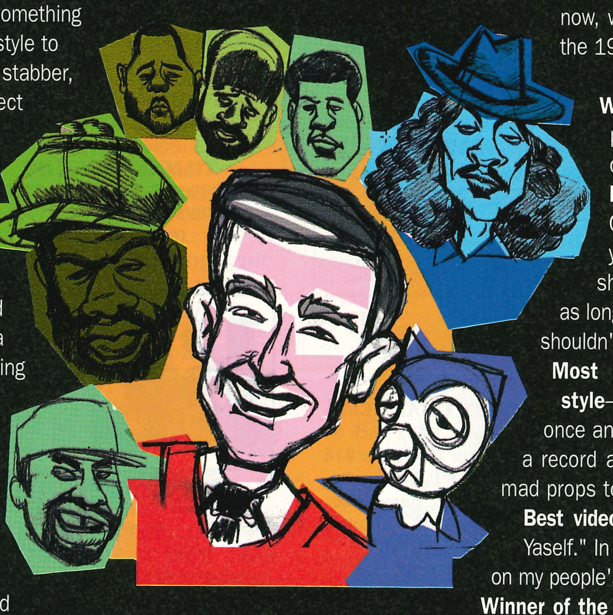

ILLUSTRATION BY TODD JAMES

Weakest artist of the year—Case. Either Mary pulled a whole lot of strings to get this kid put on or he's got to be related to **Russell.**

Best comeback of the year—De La Soul. Congratulations and I wish you all the best on your "Keeping it right" campaign. But as you should know, I'm trying to keep it wrong. So just as long as you niggas don't get in my fucking way we shouldn't have any problems.

Most popular artist in need of an image and style—Horace Brown. I saw this kid on Soul Train once and said to myself, "Shit maybe I should make a record about going down on bitches so I can catch mad props too."

Best video of the year—Jeru Tha Damaja, "Ya Playin' Yaself." In spite of the fact that I think he's trying to shit on my people's in The Firm, I've always liked this kid.

Winner of the 1996 Buc Wild troublemaker award—New York's very own **Funkmaster Flex.** Lately this kid has been flipping like hot cakes on music industry promotion people over the radio airwaves. Keep up the good work, kid, and may God keep you healthy and strong.

Winner of the 1996 Please Check Yourself award—Snoop Doggy Dogg. Look here homeboy, I don't want to lose you over some senseless bullshit too, so don't get offended by me saying that maybe you should start rocking a bullet proof vest on the regular. And as for the new album, well let's just say please consider crawling back to Dr. Dre on your hands and knees so you can start working on Doggy Style Part 2.

See Ya Next Month!!!

Buc Wild is Co-Publisher of *Around The Way Magazine.* You can write to Buc Wild c/o *Around The Way,* 824 St. Johns Place, Brooklyn, NY 11216

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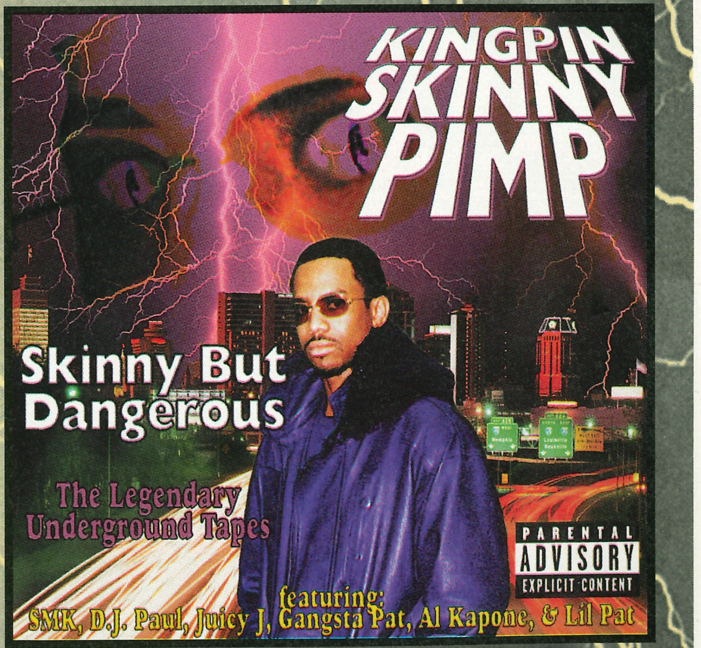
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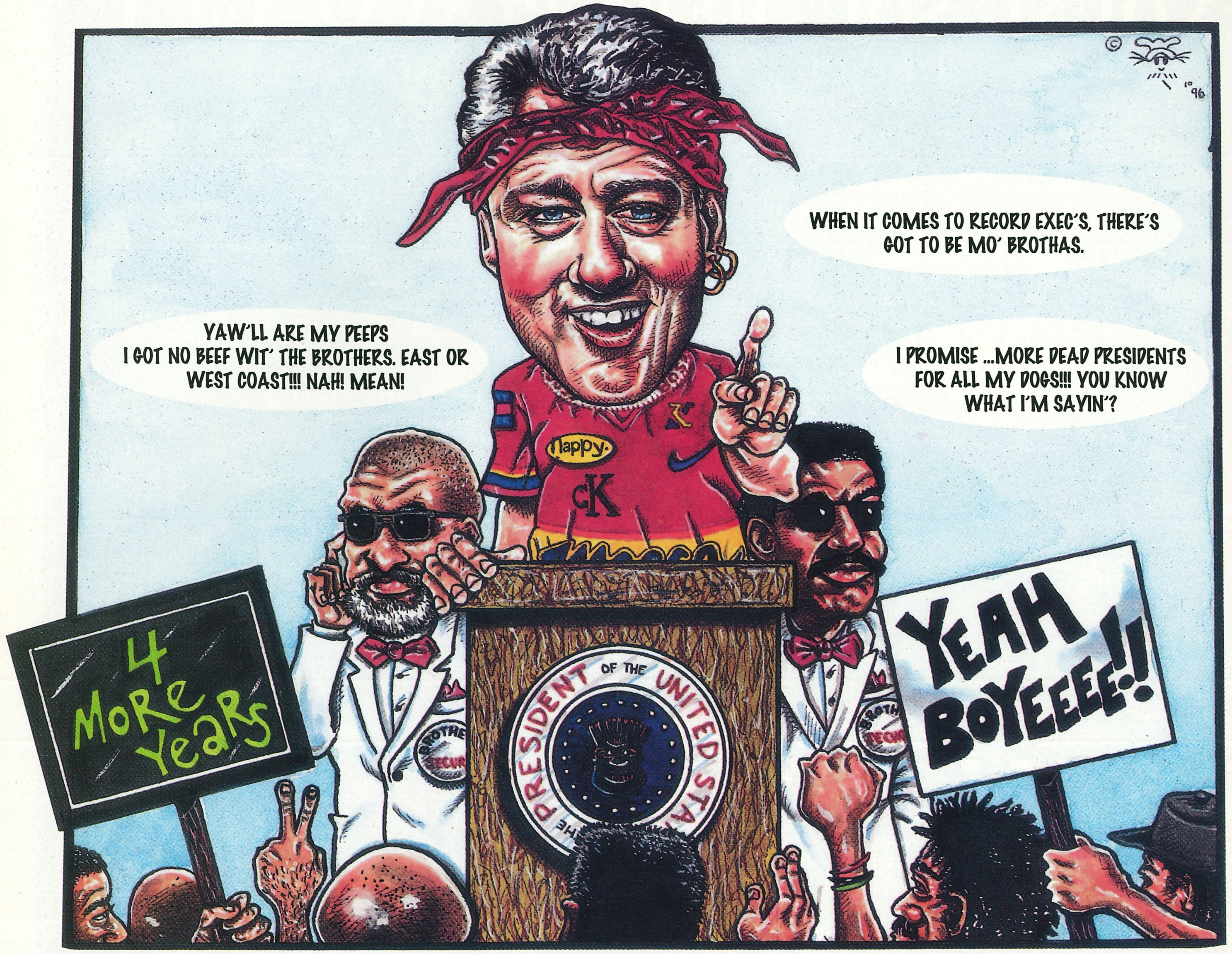
BASIX music

THE LAST WORD

BY ANDRE LEROY DAVIS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WHEN IT COMES TO RECORD EXEC'S, THERE'S GOT TO BE MO' BROTHAS.
YAW'LL ARE MY PEEPS I GOT NO BEEF WIT' THE BROTHERS. EAST OR WEST COAST!!! NAH! MEAN!
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COMING AT YOU IN FEBRUARY

WARREN G

It's been a little while since we've heard anything from Long Beach star Warren G. When we last saw him he seemed on the verge of "super" stardom. Things like his own label (G-Funk Records), and quality film appearances in *The Show* and on MTV seemed to be good indicators that Warren would be in our ears and in front of our eyes perpetually. Well, a good year and half has passed and not a peep. Where's he at? What is he doing? Find out, next month.

LARGE PROFESSOR

The original mad scientist, best known for his debut with the group Main Source, has taken a long time to release his own solo album. Amid much speculation, the Professor has remained largely mum on the subject. In rap, that usually means a bomb record is coming. We'll get to invade the laboratory of one of hip-hop's most ingenious producer/MC's, and get to the bottom of "The Extra-P Files."

SNEAKER PREVIEW

You fiend for it. You don't make major kick decisions without it. Well, it's finally here, again. The Spring Sneaker Preview. Every six months or so the face of sneakers morphs into yet another reflection of our collective interests and needs. This spring is no different, with an exciting array of colors and styles that will have you collecting you pennies for the store.

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